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CONTEMPORARY GERMAN PHILOSOPHY

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PHILOSOPHY

Volume I.

1982

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# CONTEMPORARY GERMAN PHILOSOPHY

## Volume 1

1982

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# CONTEMPORARY GERMAN PHILOSOPHY

## Volume 1

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## PREFACE

**Contemporary German Philosophy (CGP)** is projected as a yearbook following volumes reviewing the 1960–80 period. CGP is to be devoted principally to making available in English contributions to philosophical comprehension originating in German. The aim is in no sense to displace the German language as a medium for philosophical discourse, but to provide for the reader who is more at home with English some points of access to such of the more pivotal recent and contemporary contributions to philosophy originating in German as can lend themselves to this format.

In keeping with this objective, in the selection of articles to be published which shall have appeared in German, some preference is accorded to authors whose work for the most part has not as yet appeared in English. This preference shall not pertain with respect to Original Articles or to reviews, discussions, etc. Within these parameters, CGP is open to the full range of philosophical interests and orientations to which such philosophy in the German language as reflects cognizance of its historical roots importantly contributes. It is open as well to items of content which consider the bearings of insights within such allied fields as mathematics, political science, historiography, and linguistics upon philosophical issues. The term "contemporary" is intended to refer, not to any particular style of doing philosophy, but to philosophical literature of recent origin, occasionally reaching back as far as a decade or so. Approximately equal space is to be devoted to historical studies, theoretical philosophy, and practical philosophy.

CGP principally publishes:

(a) Original Articles (normally two in each issue): An Original Article may be especially prepared by the author of a major work which has appeared in German but not in English translation, this normally having been within four years of the selection, upon invitation of the Editors. The article shall be devoted primarily to the philosophical development or extension of some key idea or theme treated within the work, but it shall in no sense be a review, nor shall it be merely introductory in character. It may also be invited on the basis of a contribution to the philosophical discussion other than through the publication of a book.

- (b) Articles which have appeared or are to appear in German.
- (c) Reviews, review articles, discussions, and notes relating principally to selected major works which have appeared in German, these being for the most part by English language authors.
- (d) Reviews, review articles, discussions, and notes relating principally to selected major English works, these for the most part having appeared in German.
- (e) Announcements which may be of interest to English readers, including a listing of works originating in German which have recently appeared or are scheduled to appear in English translation.

Commensurate with its aim of publishing quality translations by persons with the philosophical and linguistic training prerequisite to particular assignments and the patience for direct collaboration with authors, CGP seeks by every means to accord suitable recognition to this demanding role. To this end it maintains a listing of philosophers with the requisite interest and skills for translating work by German language authors into English and with information pertaining to specific areas of special philosophical competence. It maintains a listing of information concerning projects for translating German philosophy into English, as well. Contributions to either of these listings are appreciated and information from them may be obtained by writing to the Coordinator, Darrel E. Christensen, Josef-Messner-Str. 28, A-5020 Salzburg, Austria. A request for information to be sent by air mail should be accompanied by a postal money order or U.S. stamps to cover postage costs.

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# Articles



# ETHICS AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

P. Lorenzen

Translated by Clark Butler

The perhaps initially incomprehensible conjunction of the terms "philosophy of science" (*Wissenschaftstheorie*<sup>1</sup>) and "ethics" has been chosen as a title in order to pose a problem that requires for its formulation more space than is available in a title. The philosophy of science is presently developed, after all, as a philosophy of mathematics and natural sciences. To attempt a philosophy of these sciences means—formulated initially in a vague manner—to reflect on their goals and methods. But the term "philosophy" (*Theorie*) is employed instead of "reflection" to indicate that no unaccountable opinions are to be professed, but that the goals and methods of these sciences are to be argued in a methodologically strict manner. To put it in still another way, the goals and methods of such sciences are to be rationally grounded. This grounding cannot be carried forth in the demonstrative style of these sciences themselves, but in this sphere as well arguments are to be given and eventual counter-arguments are to be taken into account.

A connection between the philosophy of mathematics and the natural sciences with ethics is established by the question of whether there is a scientific ethics. Somewhat more cautiously, it may be asked whether a scientific ethics is *possible*. This question as to possibility here takes the place of the question as to whether—since as a matter of fact there presently exists no recognized scientific ethics—we should not endeavor more than heretofore to achieve such.

Surely no one would deny that if such an ethics could be achieved it would be very desirable; the lack of orientation in the moral and political field—a lack that almost everyone bemoans—would then by scientific means be at least partly overcome. In order to answer the question as to a scientific ethics two preconditions are required: what "science" (*Wissenschaft*) is to mean must be defined, and what "ethics" is to mean must also be defined. At the

same time, such definitions must not be established arbitrarily but be substantiated by arguments. In order to justify a definition of "science," a certain amount of philosophy of science is required. Only then can one inquire as to whether an area of problems can be found that deserves the name "ethics," and that allows investigation according to the definition of "science" that we have justified.

In the first part of my presentation I will argue for a definition of "science" according to which, to be sure, mathematics and physics qualify as "sciences," but that also allows room for other sciences. In the second part, I will argue for a definition of "ethics" such that its problems can be treated scientifically (*wissenschaftlich*) according to the definition given in the first part.

The task to be taken up in the second part cannot be made intelligible without the first part. I would like nonetheless to anticipate the most important result, so that as few as possible false expectations arise. To this end I shall assume that you have a prior understanding of what might be called ethically oriented politics, in contrast for instance, to so-called power politics or political realism. In part two I will argue for the view that a scientific ethics becomes achievable when one seeks a politically oriented ethics, that is, an ethics that makes scientific politics possible.

In order to forestall a common misconception, it must be understood that by "scientific politics" I do not mean a science that would claim competence for the decisions of *practical* politics. Rather "scientific politics" is to be understood as a purely theoretical politics that grasps the principles of politics—for example, in current language, so-called "basic values"—in a scientific manner, and thus in the most favorable case is competent to provide guiding principles for the long-term orientation of practical politics. Any sort of expectation of a scientific answer to problems of private life—and there are many such problems that are traditionally characterized as "ethical" (or "moral")—I would like to prevent from even arising, since I would have to disappoint them. Nonetheless it will be shown that a politically oriented ethics penetrates deeply into much that is frequently viewed as private matters.

These suggestions can be clarified only in the second part. It is thus time to begin with part one, with the question of a *concept* of science, that is, of a justified definition of "science." To define a term is to define a concept. One will, for example, use in a second language another word with the same definition, but what remains constant in this substitution is the concept. Stated more precisely, it is what one often calls a "concept" in English.

As I have already mentioned, "science" is to be defined so that at least physics and mathematics fall under the definition. I shall select, even more specifically, geometry and mechanics. Why does one call what the physicist (specialized in mechanics) does a "science"? At this point it is of course already obvious that one has in mind a theoretical physicist rather than a

mechanic or practical physicist. The extraction of a cork from a bottle frequently exceeds the competence of a theoretical physicist specialized in mechanics, but he is qualified concerning the theory of this process of motion. The theoretical physicist can calculate the required forces, but he does not need to possess them himself.

The practical competence is possessed only by the practical mechanic. Yet every mechanic knows that his practice refers to theory. Mathematics and physics are indispensable as theoretical supports for all our technical practices. In other words, without these supports our technology would break down. For primitive techniques, such as the extraction of a cork from a bottle, no one up to now has been dependent on theories. There still exists today a prescientific technology. Such technology already existed before the emergence of the sciences in higher cultures. Up to now in technological practice recourse is taken to an engineer only when one just does not get along without him. And the engineer calls upon a physicist only in an emergency, and the physicist calls upon a mathematician only as a last resort.

In our educational tradition, however, this practice-oriented order is reversed. One first studies mathematics, and then applies what has been learned in physics. The engineer then applies what has been learned in physics. If the mathematicians are asked why they pursue their science, very seldom they reply that it is to lend support to physics. Even more assuredly do physicists reject the suggestion that they are pursuing their science to support technology. Their goal is not technical applications, but rather pure knowledge of the natural world. If one again substitutes "science" for "knowledge" here so as not accidentally to create a circular argument, this means that the aim of natural science is indicated to be the science of nature. Mathematics and physics have in the course of cultural history become ends in themselves.

Since, however, it would be absurd to name as a science every activity that is its own end, for example, dancing and playing, one can only, despite the *de facto* self-understanding of mathematicians and physicists, call their activity "science" because it serves to provide theoretical support to a practice, namely to our technological practice. Allow me to sketch very briefly the theoretical basis of mechanics. The starting point is provided by technological problems, such as hoisting loads, pulling wagons, throwing stones, and so on. Stated generally, man here attempts to bring bodies into a desired state of motion with the least possible personal exertion. Alteration of the state of motion of a body is called "acceleration" of the body. Mechanics follows from something that the ancients knew but never treated theoretically, namely, that accelerations can be effected by collisions. The dynamics of impact with its classical laws represent the first theoretical basis of the technical problem of accelerating bodies.

If, for example, one allows two bodies to collide nonelastically the

resulting movement is determined by the velocities of the colliding bodies. If these velocities increase by the same factor, the resulting velocity also increases by this factor. These processes are at the very least technically realizable on earth for the range of velocities that were encountered in practice prior to electrodynamics. The same proportions are valid for velocities that are low relative to the velocity of light. But on earth it does not apply *exactly*, since otherwise a gyroscope, for example, could not alter its axis relative to the table once it was placed on the table. But, as we all know, in the long run the top would, given sufficiently precise instruments, reflect the rotation of the earth, and even the earth's revolution around the sun. Thus the earth only approximates an inertial system; for purposes of technical precision, one must look to the heavens to find an inertial system. But for high velocities, comparable to the velocity of light, the laws of collision are again to be revised, even for inertial systems. This is what led to the theory of relativity.

A presupposition of this technologically oriented sketch of mechanics is of course that we can measure the velocities of bodies on earth with ever-greater precision. And to this end spatial and temporal measurements are needed. Geometry is thus introduced into a technologically oriented science. For the measurement of spatial distances a cubical grid is needed. And for this purpose a cube must be defined: definitions of plane sides, straight edges and right angle corners of bodies are equally needed. All this leads to Euclidean geometry, the demonstrative procedure of which—the “geometrical method”—has passed for more than two thousand years as a paradigm of science.

Only gradually in modern times has, instead, the procedure following the “mechanical method” imposed itself as paradigmatic: the establishment of, as one now says, hypothetical laws and the testing of such hypotheses in experience. Empirical sciences have ever since been “nomological”: they explain observable processes hypothetically by means of laws. Successful explanations justify expectations concerning what has not yet been observed. Empirical sciences thus become prognostic, and thereby come to constitute a theoretical basis of our technological practice. Our technology has developed out of primitive practice by means of a great deal of thinking: such technology is theoretically supported practice. Whatever physics may be in the self-understanding of many physicists, all physical theories from classical mechanics to quantum mechanics are useful and indeed have since then become indispensable as a theoretical basis of our technology.

How much in general we want to use this technology, however, is a political question, not a question to be treated by the natural sciences. For many, the use of the term “political” implies here that the question of whether we are dealing with a scientific problem has already been answered in the negative. But it is precisely this that must once more be carefully deliberated when the question is raised as to the possibility of a scientific ethics.

There can be ethical-political sciences only if, corresponding to technological practice, a political practice can be indicated for the support of which theoretical thinking is also possible and desirable. This theoretical thinking need not be *demonstrative* like that of mathematics and physics, which is appropriate to technology. But if arbitrary thinking and mere talk are not to be allowed, such thinking must at least give *arguments*. For every definition and proposition arguments capable of eliciting agreement (*konsensfähig*) must be given. "Agreement" in this context means: common acceptance, common rejection, or common suspension of judgment. Formulated in the language of Roman law, it means: *Sic, non, or non-liquet*. If we neglect here the *non-liquet*—which means in English "it is not yet clarified"—we then end up requiring of nondemonstrative (*argumentierenden*) science that it decide every pertinent question. But even the demonstrative sciences do not do this. To the question of whether or not there is an infinity of pairs of prime twins, the reply of the mathematicians reads at present: *non-liquet*.

Only sciences can enjoy the apparent luxury of this *non-liquet*. In practice, regardless of whether it is technological or political, a decision must be reached. In the case of *de facto* disagreement, the demand for argument capable of eliciting assent yields only a *non-liquet*, a common suspension of judgment. This demand distinguishes such argument from any form of rhetoric that tries to persuade another person to adopt an opinion. If the other person does not agree—that is, if there is *de facto* disagreement—in rhetoric this simply means that everyone retains his own opinion.

Among scientists, however, *de facto* disagreement means collectively for all concerned that the problem is not yet clarified. Further argument is necessary—and short of this no one retains his own opinion. Privately everyone may have his personal conjectures or wishes. But it is part of the discipline of scientific thinking to acknowledge a *non-liquet* in case of *de facto* disagreement. Every scientist thereby acknowledges the others as scientists. This disciplining of discourse for the sake of scientific argument or proof is learned only by learning a science. It is thus pointless for me to stop with the definition of the political sciences as a form of argument capable of eliciting assent in support of political practice. I must now proceed to the second part of my presentation and define the type of practice that is to be called "political." In connection with this I will be able to define "ethics" as well. Ethics will become a first part of politics. I shall limit the discussion to principles, basic concepts, and basic norms. I shall begin the definition of "political" practice with two counter-examples.

If power struggles occur in a group of monkeys, what takes place is no more political practice than the "actions" undertaken by a band of criminals. Augustine suggested that frequently states may be indistinguishable from rubber bands. The distinction is to be found in the fact that political practice is in the service of a *normatively ordered life in common* (*Zusammenleben*). The norms that order common life need not be as is

true today, enforced with a monopoly of power for the administration of justice. Even a Teutonic assembly cared for normatively ordered life in common, for a "political order," using the Greek term. I cannot prevent anyone who does not wish to call practice-serving normatively ordered life in common "political" from acting on his preference. No matter how he tells me he wishes to name such practice, I am for my part not arguing about terms, but have only tried to show by the examples presented that it pays to have a special term for the practices concerned with normatively ordered life in common. Assuming the linguistic usage which in such cases speaks of "political" practice, the question as to the "possibility" of political science, political theory, now reads: can political practice be supported by an argued process of thought capable of eliciting agreement?

No one among us is legally obliged to tear out his hair puzzling over political problems, that is, with the preservation and improvement of normatively-ordered community life in West Germany in 1979. From here it is but a short step to expect that political scientists might have a professional obligation to do so, but also this is not the case: no minister of education intervenes if a political scientist defines himself as an empirical social scientist or as a mere historian. This is how matters in fact stand with us. It is widely accepted among us that all social sciences are, like the technological sciences, "value-free." Only as private persons do some scientists, in their leisure time, become politically active out of personal inclination. One then says in pedagogical language that, beyond their science, they are politically "interested." In Kantian terminology, however, these are pathological rather than *rational interests*. The pedagogical language which confuses inclinations and interests thereby conceals the fact that there exists a rational interest in politics. The definition reads: he has political interest who thinks for the sake of political practice, that is, takes upon himself the effort or argument capable of eliciting assent.

One cannot teach physics to a person who does not bring with him an interest in technology (instruction that does not presuppose such interest is but a clever feat of training). Likewise, no one can understand political theories who lacks political interest. He who would understand such theories must at least participate in political practice, seeking by scientific thinking to preserve and ameliorate such practice.

These definitional preliminaries on practice, political practice, interest, and science still do not solve the problem as to whether there are any scientific principles of politics at all. But from the definition of political practice as a practice directed to normatively ordered life in common, it already follows that political principles exist, if at all, only on the basis of anthropological principles or, traditionally expressed, on the basis of fundamental ethical concepts and norms. Neither physics nor any technological science presupposes ethics. Even monkeys can participate in technological

practice; and if they could talk (more precisely, if they could do mathematics) they could also become physicists.

In order to participate in a political practice, one must first have been raised to participate in normative arrangements. Norms can be presented only linguistically. In contrast to technological practice, even the most primitive political practice requires for common life a linguistic community of speakers. Expressed in a more contemporary idiom, the community in dialogue is a condition of every political practice, and thus all the more of every political theory. Ethics as a science then begins with the concern to preserve and improve by means of reflection the process of communication for the sake of life in common, even *before* all political institutions. The word "ethics" is nothing to me, and I would wish in no case to "moralize" in the usual sense. "Ethics" here serves merely as a term designating a basic part of science presupposed by political life, and thus for a "proto-politics."

I trust enough has now been said by way of preparation for the methodical construction of the ethical-political sciences upon which I shall now embark. I take our communicative practice as a starting point, and seek to improve this practice. I allow myself here to abbreviate the expression "preserve and improve" employed above—an expression previous to the distinction between "conservative" (that is merely preservative) and "progressive" (that is, merely amelioratory)—by simply using the term "progressive." The speech process of communication, especially as it is practiced by us, and especially among theoreticians, seems unequivocally to stand in need of improvement.

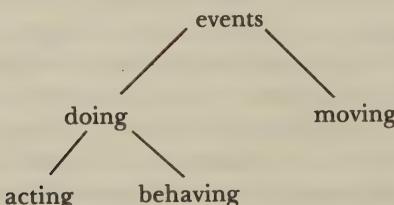
In order to talk with one another we do not need to have at our disposal a language as a finished cultural product. We can ourselves perfect the linguistic means of our life in common. Only such a "construction" of all our linguistic means—which is why the philosophy of science espoused here is said to be "constructive"—makes possible a process of argued thought capable of eliciting agreement: agreement must also be reached concerning the very linguistic means employed.

It is surely senseless to reflect on which distinctions ought to be designated by words for purposes of a scientific conceptualization of the political practice of a given culture without entering into that culture. The problem is thus immediately posed of selecting primitive terms, that is, basic concepts. We often speak in this context of the choice of a categorial starting point. One individual chooses one categorial starting point, another selects a second, and the possibility of agreement is immediately lost. Instead of a dialogue, each conducts a monologue with himself. But according to a more strict linguistic usage followed, for example, by Aristotle, "categories" are always grammatical distinctions: they concern only the syntax or form of the language, not the material content. They are thus also independent of the culture as it is fleshed out materially. They are transcultural, or, as one

might say, transhistorical. Naturally, if one refers only to the grammar of the cultural language at hand, one does not find such transcultural categories capable of eliciting assent. Greek science made this mistake in that it employed Greek as *the* cultural language; scholasticism repeated the mistake with Latin, and modern science (with the exception of the natural sciences) allows itself even today to be strung along by one or another of the national languages.

Only modern linguistic criticism as begun by Frege makes possible a transnational science of even culture-specific political practice; I at least maintain that political science's doctrine of *principles* is transcultural. The proof of this assertion is provided by the *empractical* construction of a rational grammar. Bühler's term "empractical" stands for the introduction of linguistic tools in the *execution* of some practice. Wittgenstein provides the famous example of the execution of a building practice in which the distinction between certain building materials is learned *along with* the introduction of suitable words to mark the distinction. But in elementary imperatives as they arise in the course of the building practice (for example, "Peter, carry the board!"), what is relevant for our purposes is not the material distinctions (such as between "carry" and "throw" or between "board" and "stone"), but rather only the (grammatical) categories. We come to know in this example imperatives, deed-words and thing-words, as well as a proper name. These distinctions belong to a rational grammar rather than to English (or Indo-European), for every language that is to be used for some practice would be well-advised to make them available, if not syntactically then at least pseudo-syntactically in the language's lexicon.

Even indicatives, such as "Peter carries the board" or "the stone falls" are learned empractically, for they are part of the process of carrying out an imperative, or of the effect of carrying one out. I will not attempt here to symbolize this beginning of a rational grammar. Let it only be noted that the English word "fall"—in contrast to "carry"—is an event-word rather than a deed-word. It is advisable to establish the point that all deeds are also events, but an imperative is meaningful only for deed-words: only magicians command stones to fall or the sun to rise. From this rational grammar one derives the following categorial scheme:



We have here five terms, but they are derived by definitions from only two distinctions. First, doing is a special type of event; any event that is not a case of doing is called "moving." Second, acting is a special case of doing; any case of doing that fails to be an action is called "behaving."

This distinction between acting and doing is based on the fact that doing is common to humans and animals (in contrast to stones and plants, which only move), but that only humans speak, from which it follows that only men ask and answer questions, for example, by saying "yes" or "no," and that only human beings *respond* to commands by either carrying them out or failing to do so. Acting, according to my proposed terminology is the deed (whether of obeying or failing to do so) with which a human being responds to a command. Instead of responding by action, that is, by a responsible deed, human beings can also merely react, that is merely behave, like the animals. As an aside I should like to add here that the further differentiation appearing in Aristotle, which first specifies life within the class of events (so that all non-living beings merely move), and the *n* distinguishes within life doing (of animals) from the moving (of plants), is, it is true, biologically justifiable (animals and plants are genealogically related, in contrast to all non-living beings), but does not belong to the principles of ethical-political thought. The distinction is in no way deducible from rational grammar. The three deed-concepts that do permit of such deduction (that is, behaving, speaking, and acting) lead us back to the basic political norms, and in the first place, of course, to basic anthropological norms. In the tradition of Platonic political theory four cardinal *virtues* are enumerated. These four will later be expanded, through the Christian triad of faith, love, and hope, to seven virtues. The number four is merely traditional: Plato enumerates in his anthropology only three parts of the soul, for which the most frequently used terms in English are "sensation," "thinking," and "willing." Today one would assume that such basic concepts fall within the competence of psychologists. But psychology takes over these terms uncritically from everyday speech—or else completely shuns them as in behaviorism, thus giving rise to a purely natural science of man.

A definition of these fundamental concepts on the basis of deed-concepts is not difficult. One has behaviorism to thank for the reduction of talk of sensation—namely of sensations of pleasure and pain—to talk of *learning* modes of behavior. That humans seek out pleasure and avoid pain when merely reacting to stimuli thus becomes, for the behaviorist, analytically true both for animals and humans. Instead of speaking of the traditional faculty of sensation it thus suffices to speak of the faculty of *learning*.

It is already clear in Plato how *thinking* can be defined as an inner speech, as a conversation of the soul with itself. So-called imaginative thinking I should like to term "representation" (*Vorstellung*) so that all *thinking* is by definition linguistic thinking. And all the distinctions that are mean-

ingful for dialogue, for external speech, are carried over to apply to thinking as an inner speech.

Practical dialogues start out with *proposals*: the proposals are then deliberated upon by means of the give and take of *argued* speech, and if all goes well a common *conclusion* is reached at the end. Noologically, that is, in the course of thinking, one begins in self-dialogue with *wishes*; these wishes are then reflected upon back and forth; and when all goes well a solitary *resolution* is reached at the end. If the resolution is merely a "yes" or "no" (should I or should I not), it is called a *decision*.

Whoever arrives at a resolution or decision may be said to have *willed* whatever he has resolved upon. But the term "willing" is superfluous: it is but a question of the faculty of action (*Handlungsvermögen*), namely, the faculty of doing what one has resolved upon. The faculty of action is often weakly developed in human beings. Should anyone have a strong faculty of action, he is said to be *energetic* (*tatkräftig*), which is less open to misunderstanding than the more usual expression "strong-willed." For, ever since the Christianization of antiquity, more precisely since Clement of Alexandria, people have always spoken of a will that is good or bad, and not merely strong or weak, in carrying out a good or bad resolution. This Christian will is a remnant of the mythical action of the Old Testament God. In a scientific ethics the distinction between good and bad is meaningful only for resolutions, not for the faculty of action. For classical Greek ethics this was obvious. Resolutions arise through the reflection that begins with wishes. And one has wishes, more specifically desires, because one reacts according to sensations of pain and pleasure, as do animals.

The faculties of sensation and thought alone are to be judged as good or bad. To make good resolutions, one ought to have a strong faculty of action (energy), in which case one is an upright [*rechtschaffen*] man. Instead of "upright" one traditionally says "just," which gives rise to justice as the fourth virtue, while "upright" rather designates virtue in general. But the question remains as to the standard by which one wishes to rate the faculties of sensation and thought. How should matters stand with the upright man? I might equally ask how you yourself would like to have matters. Perhaps the faculty of sensation should be as differentiated as possible in enjoyments or sensations of pleasure, pains being treated pharmaceutically, while the faculty of thought ought perhaps to possess the technically rational competence to achieve the conditions required for enjoyments. By merely adding the energy required to realize enjoyments without regard for others, we would probably have defined the ideal of the greatest number: the hedonistic man of success. The upright man of Plato and Aristotle, of Aquinas but also of Kant, Marx, or Bahro is of course different. He refuses to obey his impulses or sensations of pleasure and pain; instead of placing his power of thought merely as a means at the disposal of his impulses, he masters impulse in order at last to ponder his deed. The relation of the faculty of sensation to that of thought is meditated subordination:

*temperance [Besonnenheit]*. Temperance and energy together form the ethical virtue of courage. Courage is the emotional and thus nonintellectual condition of uprightness. But courage is also possessed by many scoundrels, and they are the most dangerous precisely when they are technically perfect. Contrary to the Judeo-Christian myth of the good or bad will, the distinction between good and bad depends on thought alone.

But on what basis is one case of thinking "good" and another "bad" (or in any case not "good")? Using logic alone one realizes that from nothing, nothing follows. One cannot deduce a principle of "good" (or, as is said more precisely, "rational") thought out of nothing. It is precisely because of this difficulty that I have defined ethics as proto-politics, and have assigned to political thinking the task of serving political practice, that is, the preservation and improvement of our normatively ordered life in common.

Participation in political practice and political interest are thus presupposed; the presupposition is that one's thinking is to preserve and improve political practice. From this a principle of reason can be deduced. Norms are in the simplest case expressed by generalized hypothetical imperatives. Ethical political thinking concerns itself with such norms as are capable of eliciting assent from all. For the only alternative to general agreement is the compulsory imposition of norms, and that is a problem of social technology, not an ethical-political one.

In traditional cultures we find unreflected recognition of norms. Children also recognize the "natural" authority of their parents, their commands and prohibitions. But should there no longer be any traditional authority among thinking adults, only *coercion* remains as a means of imposing a normative order, unless—and this is the sole alternative to coercion, that is, in *freedom*—agreement is reached in an uncoerced manner by talking without anyone being set up in a position of authority. In this latter case discussion proceeds "without regard for persons." This principle of uncoerced dialogue, in which all participating *subjects* (as is said traditionally) form themselves into persons precisely by not insisting on their own utterances merely because they are their own, is called the principle of *reason*. It is the principle that no one insists on his mere subjectivity. A rational individual is by definition one whose education has resulted, not in subjectivity, but precisely in the overcoming of subjectivity. Rational subjects also go by the name of "persons." In religious language, the overcoming of subjectivity is called "transcendence." Reason is thus *transsubjectivity*. This connection with religious traditions, in which the principle of transcendence, by which subjects first become persons, imaginatively itself becomes a transcendent person, makes it clear that transcendence is primarily an ethical rather than religious principle. Ethics is the rational kernel that lies in the religious husk.

I am now equipped with a basic terminology for the construction of ethical-political sciences. The principle of all rationally argued thought has already been isolated. But as long as a human being is taken to be only a

Neanderthal or child, isolated from the culture in which he lives, all content is still lacking. What one needs for mastery of his life problems, beyond technological knowledge, is training in the political art of reaching agreement through transsubjective dialogue in the face of conflicting norms, and thus reestablishing a common order. The *de facto* norms currently in effect present themselves as the raw material of the ethical-political sciences: the task is to prioritize among norms in a transsubjective manner, so that proposals for their alteration can be formulated, to criticize and reform *de facto* norms. The principle of transsubjectivity is the criterion of this critique and reform. The comparison that suggests itself between norms and the hypotheses of the ongoing technologically oriented sciences is applicable only with restriction. It can of course be stipulated that just as hypotheses may eventually prove false or "untrue" upon critical examination, so a transsubjective examination of norms may prove them to be "unjust." The norms that have withstood tests for injustice thus far undertaken may even be called, until further notice, "just."

However, this analogy between truth and justice may blind one to a decisive difference. A hypothesis is judged by replicating the situation that appears in it as its condition. This replication is tested by spatial and temporal measurements, and thus can be carried out by a method independent of the empirical hypothesis. In judging a norm as "unjust," however, the situation in which this judgment occurs cannot be replicated. Even opinions regarding what the situation is are subjective, and agreement over the exposition of the situation can be achieved only as a result of transsubjective deliberations.

Beyond pure utilitarianism, which proceeds from the fiction of a maximization (or, as the case may be, minimization) of the sum of pleasure (or of pain) as if a human being could not endure pain for the sake of justice, what can be given to guide the self-alteration of a society is the principle that human beings ever-increasingly become persons, forming a speech community in which transsubjective agreement as to norms is the highest norm. The principle of reason of transsubjectivity describes no state of affairs, but rather only a direction. Or—as the Chinese would say—the goal is the way: *Tao*. In the modern terminology of basic values, one obtains the formula that the pluralism of basic values be replaced by a universalism founded on the single "basic value" of transsubjectivity, the realization of dialogic reason. Politics then no longer conducts itself pluralistically in what is penultimate while the basic values, which are ultimate, remain inviolable in the conscience of the nonpolitical individual. On the contrary, it is rather politics that, as a direction, offer what is ultimate, the basic value of reason. And the question to be decided in the conscience of the political individual is what the next steps in this direction might and ought be. The subject examines himself in conscience as to his "transsubjectivity." To be sure, nothing is decided with respect to subsequent steps by means of this eman-

cipation from the pluralism of supposed basic values, but discussion has a basis from which it can commence.

Since it is a question here of the possibility of scientific ethics, I fortunately need not go into all the difficulties that arise when one wishes to analyze and critically understand a particular political situation, especially the situation in West Germany in 1979, in order to justify guidelines for long-term politics. I remain here on an entirely general level, in order at least to disentangle confusions in the theory of ethical-political principles. Nonetheless, I would like at least to allude to the particularity of the situation insofar as it conditions ethical-political reason. The principle of reason was justified as the only alternative to a compulsory normative order ultimately imposed by physical force. This alternative, however, was linked to the condition that there is no longer, in the political union in question, any *traditional* authority to preserve the normative order of life in common. In the course of world history, this condition first prevailed with the Greeks. From the founding of their city-states in about the seventh century B.C. on, they had to maintain a normative order without being able to find support in the traditional communalism of a religion. Every educated man of course knew his Homer, but from Thales on there was an immanent explanation of natural events, that is, an explanation that did not take recourse to supernatural gods. The myths became poetic fictions, so that Plato in the fourth century B.C. could tersely say: "The poets lie." In opposition to the Sophists' reduction of all political thinking to rhetorical technique, Plato and Aristotle posited their attempt to clarify the principles of ethical-political reason.

This political "philosophy"—as one then said rather than "science"—was, as is known, not in fact successful. The Roman world empire based itself not on ethical principles but on the imposition of a legal order, however admirable, by military might. Only in late antiquity did the Roman Empire become Christian, and shortly thereafter the Western Empire became Germanic. In the European Middle Ages, there temporarily was an equilibrium between the traditional authority of Christianity and the traditional authority of the Germanic tribes. This equilibrium, however, fell apart from the fourteenth century on, until in the sixteenth century there commenced the triumphal march of scientific-technological reason. With the ending of Absolutism, for the second time in world history a condition prevailed such that in the political unions of Europe—now states—there no longer existed any traditional authority to preserve the normative order of life in common. For the second time such preservation had to be attempted by reason as the sole alternative to force.

It seems to me that this attempt—and I refer in particular to political philosophy from Kant to Hegel and to the political science of Marx and its global historical consequences—has not yet reached its goal. In Western Europe and North America a skeptical withdrawal within the bounds of technological reason has imposed itself since the last century; only the

demonstrative sciences in the manner of mathematics and the natural sciences pass as sciences. This is what is known as "scientism."

In the eastern states the principles of the social sciences are primarily taught dogmatically, which is to say that doctrinal traditions are maintained by force. Anyone who would deal neither dogmatically nor skeptically with his own political rationality confronts the following problem, formulated in a general way. The current states are political unions that have developed out of primitive political unions. They have evolved primarily an aesthetic-religious *culture* which, however, has led to a pluralism of traditional life forms within these unions. Secondarily they have produced a unified technological-economic *society*. As a consequence of its scientism, the West pursues merely an administration of technological-economic society instead of politics. For technological reason, religious traditions can be nothing more than superstitions, and are thus relegated to the private sphere.

For political reason, which bases itself (in the sense explained earlier) on the ethical foundation of the overcoming of subjectivity, the administration of technological-economic society becomes by contrast but a tool of politics. It is a tool that, beyond the bare preservation of life and thus of the technological-economic standard of living, aims at the ethical-political education of citizens. Only in this way might man achieve an ethical-political *civilization*. Transsubjectivity, as that which allows human beings to become persons, can only be acquired through education. But this educational task can only indirectly be advanced by the state, namely by advancing those life forms of our aesthetic-religious culture in which man to some extent comes to feel at home with transsubjective thought and action. No form of reason can replace the totality of a life form. But in the name of reason, no totality is permitted to posit itself as absolute. The pluralism of religions, world views, and so on must thus become cooperative or, as is also said, nonantagonistic. This seems to me to be the decisive problem of the present-day intellectual situation.

The classical Enlightenment, which lives on in the West, has by means of technological reason merely destroyed the religious traditions. "*Ecrazez l'in-fâme*" was Voltaire's categorical imperative. Political reason, by contrast, is directed toward the ethical kernel of the religious traditions and must therefore advance these traditions, but at once enlighten them about themselves when they try to impose their peculiarities antagonistically as the *sole* path of salvation also in political legislation. That is the task of practical political education. Theoretical politics, as a non-demonstrative science, nonetheless called upon to *argue* (*argumentierende Wissenschaft*), cannot determine the next practical steps, but it can justify long-term goals.

## TRANSLATION NOTES

<sup>1</sup> I have preferred "philosophy of science" to "theory of science" for "*Wissenschaftstheorie*" because it designates the readily understood subject which the author clearly has in mind. The Fichtean connotations of "theory of science" are absent from the text.

# FICHTE'S ORIGINAL INSIGHT\*

Dieter Henrich

Translated by David R. Lachterman

"Self-consciousness" is the basic <theme and guiding> principle of Fichte's thought. This alone explains why the present age has turned a deaf ear to him. Contemporary philosophy, like contemporary art, arose from a mistrust of impassioned and dramatic talk about the self; it replaced such talk with the concrete notion of "*Existenz*" and the objective analysis of language. Consequently, only the fading memory of a tradition sustains Fichte's fame; it often requires an effort to summon up admiration for that tradition itself.

For this reason it is difficult to present Fichte's thought not only as a historical document, but also as a genuine contribution to philosophical insight. However, this is what is intended in this essay. I want to show that at the start of his philosophical career Fichte made a discovery. In the first place, what he discovered was not so much a fact, but rather a difficulty, a

\*This essay is the first of a series of undertakings in which Henrich has discussed philosophical problems in connection with a theory of self-consciousness. First published under the title "Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht," in *Subjektivität und Metaphysik, Festschrift für Wolfgang Cramer*, ed. Dieter Henrich and Hans Wagner (Frankfurt am main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1966) pp. 188-232, the following year it appeared as a separate pamphlet from the same publisher. An abbreviated and modified version, "La découverte de Fichte," appeared in *Revue de la métaphysique et de morale* 72 (1967): 154-169.

Quotations from Fichte have been rendered in approximate conformity with the glossary in Heath and Lach's translation *Fichte; The Science of Knowledge (Wissenschaftslehre)* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970). In particular, their decision to translate *setzen* and *Setzung* as *posit* and *positing* has been followed, despite some unwarranted connotations. *Das Ich* is translated as *the Self*. Several of Henrich's references have been expanded or identified.

problem: He saw that "self-consciousness," which philosophy long before him had claimed to be the basis of knowledge, can only be conceived under conditions that had not been considered previously. This problem furnished the clue that guided his reflections even before he could formulate it explicitly. He came closer and closer to the solution as he advanced along the tortuous path of his *Doctrine of Science*. Even when he did not succeed in reaching a solution, he did advance the question; indeed, he advanced it to such an extent that even today to follow his route is still to learn something from him. Anyone seeking a suitable concept of "self-consciousness" must go back to Fichte and to the knowledge he achieved. Even today this knowledge is still not understood since his achievement was eclipsed too soon and quite unjustly by the condensed and even hermetic character of his rhetoric and by Hegel's overpowering shadow.

In the course of supporting this thesis I also want to contribute to a more sophisticated and accurate view of the relation of contemporary philosophy to Fichte and to Idealism in general. It is still widely believed that Fichte's thinking is historically linked with the excess and exorbitance of modern consciousness as it approached an imminent crisis. His theory of the "I" is taken to amount to an equation identifying the being of the self and its power. The growing pretension and presumption of subjectivity seem to be the sources of this theory. This process is thought to have started with Descartes and to have reached its climax in Fichte. Apart from this historical role, Fichte is taken to be important only for his contribution to the development of Hegel's dialectic.

An assessment of this sort throws no light on the actual content of his doctrines or on the motives that stimulated him. However, if both of these are illuminated, then people will no longer be under the impression that something important is being said when the alleged hubris of the modern mind is imputed to Fichte. This imputation itself is the fruit of a self-deceptive present age continually and ardently needing to define itself by way of opposition to its origins. In doing so, it fails to recognize what paved the way for it, and to whom it is permanently indebted for any self-understanding it might achieve. Anyone who makes his way into the real issue that occupied Fichte will no longer be convinced by this sweeping diagnosis of his philosophy or by a more general diagnosis, which sees in Nietzsche's equation of nihilism with the Will-to-Power, the supreme philosophical expression of the modern world and regards Fichte's doctrine of the absolute Self as preparing the way toward it. Fichte's original insight, therefore, is interesting and valuable because of its bearing on an important theme of philosophical theory; but more important, what is at stake here is whether a philosophy can be worked out in harmony with the basic aspects of contemporary consciousness.

In what follows, this latter concern will nonetheless retreat into the background. The difficulties in broaching the main issue of Fichte's thought

are great enough. In large part these are the result of the condition of his texts. Fichte himself released only a few of these to the public. In only one of them *The Doctrine of Science* of 1794, does he develop the foundation of his philosophy in detail. Nonetheless, what we are justified in saying about all Fichte's lecture-courses also holds true of this one text, namely, that he modified his conception in the course of writing it down. Accordingly, Fichte met every attempt to pin him down to the letter of his works by advising the reader to view them from the viewpoint of the whole, since the detailed exposition is almost always faulty. Even in his final years he thought that he could grasp and expound on the idea of the Doctrine of Science far more clearly than he ever had. In such circumstances it is easy to understand why there has not yet been a discussion dealing in a genuinely philosophical way with the issues Fichte raises; we might surmise that even if fate had been kinder to his posthumous influence, it would have been difficult for such a discussion to take place earlier. The scene was dominated by general expositions, interpretations focused on Hegel, and learned biographies dealing with the agitated ambience of Fichte's own age. Analyses such as those presented by Gueroult and Gurwitsch scarcely met with any response and found no followers.<sup>1</sup>

The most that can be achieved at present is no more than a preparation for future understanding. Perhaps half of Fichte's written work is still undeciphered literary remains. The edition on which we have to rely mainly furnishes versions of the Doctrine of Science that were worked over by Fichte's son. For this reason no interpretation can rely on editorially secure

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1. G. Gurwitsch, *Fichtes System der konkreten Ethik* (Tübingen, 1924); M. Guerolt, *L'évolution et la structure de la Doctrine de la Science* (Paris, 1930). <Since the original publication of this essay a series of new works have appeared that are interpretations of Fichte and also works of philosophy; for example Wolfgang Janke, *Fichte: Sein und Reflexion. Grundlagen der kritischen Vernunft* (Berlin, 1970), and Hans Rademacher, *Fichtes Begriff des Absoluten* (Frankfort, 1970).> <In the meantime many volumes of the Johann Gottlieb Fichte-Gesamtausgabe of the Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften have appeared, edited by Reinhard Lauth and others. These volumes, however, constitute at present only a small portion of Fichte's collected works. In addition, the volumes of this Academy-edition print the volume and page numbers of the Immanuel Hermann Fichte edition in the margins. Thus it is possible and, for the time being, even necessary to rely on this old edition. Study-editions of a few important versions of the Doctrine of Science which have not yet appeared in the Academy-edition have been published in the *Philosophische Bibliothek* of the Felix Meiner Verlag: *Darstellung der Wissenschaftslehre, Aus der Jahren 1801/02*, ed. R. Lauth (Munich, 1977) and *Die Wissenschaftslehre. Zweiter Vortrag in Jahre 1804*, ed. R. Lauth and Joachim Widmann (Munich, 1975). See also *Erste Wissenschaftslehre von 1804*, ed. H. Gliwitzky (Stuttgart, 1969).>

texts. This is another reason for heeding Fichte's recommendation to proceed from the idea of the whole.

Thus, for several reasons, the following analysis takes its bearings more from the issue than from the texts. I shall try to interpret and discuss Fichte's original insight as a contribution to the theory of self-consciousness. In the course of this it will also emerge that the development of the Doctrine of Science can and must be interpreted as the progressive analysis of a concept of the Self. If an interpreter fails to understand this progress, he can do little to further historical interpretations of Fichte's work and life. In particular, he will not be able to take a firm position on the notorious question of whether, and in what sense, a fundamental change occurs in the course of his thinking. However, historical interpretation and explanation of texts are important tasks in their own right. After having begun by disregarding them, I want at the end to contribute something toward resolving them.

## I

We can divide the formation of a theory of self-consciousness into several historical stages. Fichte comes at the beginning of the third stage. After a prehistory stretching from late antiquity into the early modern age, Descartes was the first to make the Self the basic principle and theme of philosophy. He found in the Self the evidentiary basis of all possible knowledge. Leibniz went further and saw in self-consciousness the model for the basic metaphysical concepts of force and substance. In this way it became the basis, not only of the certainty, but also of the content of ontology. Afterward Locke taught that the term "I" signifies only an act of self-identification. This blocked the possibility of taking ontological concepts obtained from self-consciousness and applying them retroactively to the definition of self-consciousness. Leibniz's Self "which is so full of meaning" had become a riddle without place; Hume proclaimed his doubts about its very existence. Jean-Jacques Rousseau was still following Locke when he asserted that self-consciousness is the presupposition behind the connection we produce in making judgments. Thanks to Rousseau the Self became the basis of logic. Kant was following Rousseau's lead when he made the Self the "highest point" of transcendental philosophy to which "the whole of logic and, conformably therewith," the theory of the knowledge of objects "must be affixed" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, B 184, note).

Self-consciousness is the common and distinctive theme of all these theories. Furthermore, in most of them self-consciousness is understood as a principle that allows us to ground and establish other knowledge. Because those who held such theories were predominantly interested in its grounding-function, they did not investigate what self-consciousness is in its own right or ask how its own nature can be conceived. They investigated instead its relations to other items, relations in virtue of which it is a

grounding-principle; thus, in Descartes' case, self-consciousness was the basis of evidence, in Leibniz, of categories, in Rousseau and Kant, of judgments.

Despite this restricted field of investigation and the diversity among their theses, all of these theories are guided by the very same idea of the structure of the Self. Kant articulated this idea and occasionally discussed it: he conceives the Self as that act in which the knowing subject, abstracting from all particular objects, turns back into itself and in this way becomes aware of its constant unity with itself. Self-consciousness is unique inasmuch as there is no distinction, here, between the one who thinks and the object of his thought, between the one who possesses something and what he possesses. Where the Self is, both the subject and this subject as its own object are present. Also, we can never grasp the Self as subject in isolation in the way we can any other thing, whatever it might be. When we are thinking of it we have already presupposed the consciousness of it in our own thought and thus have turned the subject-self of which we are thinking into an object. Thus we can only revolve around it in a perpetual circle. This means that self-consciousness, considered on its own, does not amplify or extend our knowledge of reality. The knower already contains what he grasps when he turns back into himself.<sup>2</sup>

That self-consciousness does perform this act of turning back can easily be inferred, Kant thinks, from its structure. "The expression 'I think (this object)' already shows that I, in respect to the representation [of 'I'], am not passive."<sup>3</sup> The word "I" refers to someone who is performing an act. Now, if this subject is itself the object of its own knowledge, then it is so precisely in virtue of its active subjectivity.

All Kant's predecessors would have seen propositions such as these as explications of their own ideas of self-consciousness. To reduce their theory to a short formula, they held that the essence of the Self is reflection. This theory begins by assuming a subject of thinking and emphasizes that this subject stands in a constant relationship to itself. It then goes on to assert that this relationship is a result of the subject's making itself into its own object; in other words, the activity of representing, which is originally related to objects, is turned back upon itself and in this way produces the unique case of an identity between the activity and the result of the activity.<sup>4</sup>

Although this idea seems intuitively clear it is in fact just the opposite. It is not the Self but the theory of the Self as reflection that continually turns in a

2. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A 364/ B 404; A 355.

3. *Reflexion* 4220. <See Benno Erdman, *Reflexionen Kants zur kritischen Philosophie. Aus Kants handschriftlichen Aufzeichnungen*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: Fries Verlag, 1884).>

4. To be sure, two other elements of a more comprehensive theory of self-consciousness were before Kant's eyes in addition to the reflection theory. On the one hand, he posed the question: What kind of knowledge is it that the Self

circle. This is brought home by the perplexity into which the theory falls as soon as we pose some simple questions. We want to raise two such questions; the first is one Fichte himself raised, thereby inaugurating a new stage in the history of theories of self-consciousness, a stage in which the structure of the Self becomes the essential theme.

Our first question, then, is this: The theory that the Self is reflection talks about a Subject-Self that knows itself by entering into relation to itself, that is, by turning itself back into itself. How can this subject be conceived? If we assume that it is really the Self when it functions as the subject, then it is obvious that we are turning in a circle and are presupposing what we want to explain. For we can only speak of an "I" where a subject has apprehended itself, where an ego says "I" to itself. Self-consciousness is distinguished from all other forms of knowledge precisely by the fact that one and the same item presents itself in self-consciousness in a double guise. Whatever act might bring this consciousness about, only the total result, in which the "I" gains possession and knowledge of itself, can be called "I." However, *this* act can by no means be described as reflection. For reflection can only mean that an item of knowledge which is already at hand is properly apprehended and thereby made explicit! However, the reflection-theory of the self wants to explain the origin, not the clarity, of self-consciousness. Because this is what it claims to do, it is circular. It can only ignore this circle; it can never escape from it: I am meant to be the one who recollects himself by reflecting on himself. Thus anyone who sets reflection into motion must himself already be both the knower and the known. The subject of reflection on its own thereby satisfies the whole equation "I = I." Yet, reflection alone was supposed to bring about this equation.

We cannot avoid this result by assuming that the Subject-Self is really not to be thought of as Self, in other words, that self-consciousness first comes

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obtains by reverting to itself? The immediacy of its self-possession suggests taking it as a mode of *intuition*, while activity, rationality, and reflexivity speak in favor of taking it as *conceptual* knowledge. Yet, reflexivity excludes the idea of the Self as intuition just as decisively as the immediacy with which it possesses itself excludes giving it a conceptual character. Since, according to Kant, there can only be two types of knowledge, either intuitive or conceptual, in the end he <simply expressed his own predicament> by saying that the "I" is a "transcendental consciousness" (Reflection 5661). (On the other hand, Kant also distinguishes between the Self as consciousness and the experience we have of the Self. The difference between them is the basis of his distinction between pure and empirical apperception. It leads, furthermore, to the problem of connecting consciousness of the *existence* of the "I" with the self-awareness of a cognitive subject. These two elements are peculiar to Kant's doctrine and cannot be separated from it. If we enter into them in greater detail, then difficulties quickly arise, especially if we try to make them compatible with the reflection theory of the Self. In any event, that theory remains the dominant idea of the Self, even in the Critical Philosophy. It formulates the idea of the essence of self-consciousness shared by an entire epoch.

about as the *product* of reflection. Such an attempt to escape the circle soon creates problems for if the Subject-Self is really something other than the Self, then it can never achieve the unity of consciousness, namely, the identity "I = I," by means of reflection. Self-consciousness is the identity of its *relata*. If their relation is interpreted via reflection and thus as an achievement through which the act of reflection becomes conscious of itself, then the subject of the act must either already be the Self, or the equation "I = I" will never hold. If the Subject-Self is not the Self, then neither can the Self, of which we come to have knowledge, that is, the Object-Self, ever be identical with it. Thus, the reflection theory of self-consciousness either presupposes the phenomenon of Self without clarifying it, or totally invalidates it.

A second question will disclose the same defect in this theory.<sup>5</sup> The reflection-theory assumes that the Self obtains knowledge of itself by turning back and entering into a relation to itself. Now, if we are to explain consciousness of the identity "I-I," it is not enough that any subject whatsoever gain an explicit consciousness of any object whatsoever. This subject must also *know* that its object is identical with itself. It cannot appeal to some third term for knowledge of this identity; the phenomenon of self-consciousness exhibits an immediate relation to itself, a self-relation, as I shall call it. The theory that the Self is reflection confirms, conforming with this phenomenon, that the Self grasps itself *only* through its return back into itself. Reflection means self-relation, not relation to a third term that informs us: "Here someone has grasped himself." Thus Mephistopheles is delighted when the drunkards in Auerbach's Cellar place their knives on their noses, which they mistake for sweet grapes.<sup>ii</sup> The Self, however, is its own devil from whom Mephistopheles can keep nothing back. It knows itself in an original way, not through exhortations or clever inferences. But how can self-consciousness know that it has grasped itself, if an Object-Self has come about only via the Self's act of reflection? Obviously it can know this only if it already knew itself before. For only on the basis of previous knowledge is it possible for self-consciousness to say: "What I am grasping is I myself." But, if it already knows itself, then it already knows that "I = I." And thus the theory of reflection begs the question once again. It presupposes that the problem which it has been faced with has been completely solved at the start.

Fichte was the first philosopher to recognize this circle and to draw consequences from it. In his opinion everyone who falls victim to it makes the mistake of representing the Self merely as one object among others. Fichte's view can be elucidated in the following way: The reflection theory does indeed begin with a Subject-Self; but it then proceeds to think of it only as a force capable of acting upon itself. With this the theory gives up the distinctive sense of subjectivity that belongs to self-consciousness. The latter is in-

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5. Compare H. Schmitz, *System der Philosophie*, vol. 1 (Bonn, 1964), pp. 249. f.

terpreted instead in terms of a matter-of-fact activity that really belongs in the sphere of objects.<sup>15</sup> Someone who thinks of this activity is thus presupposing all along a thinking subject (namely, his own), for which this activity is an object. Hence, he forgets consider the Subject-Self in its own right and actually to bring into focus a self-relation that entails self-knowledge. He speaks about it instead from the standpoint of knowledge that has not yet become its own theme and focus. For just this reason he does not find it strange that he is interpreting the Self as the kind of reflexive relation characteristic of the activity of objects, but not of the act of knowing. This blindness is what first makes it possible to use the model of reflection. It hides from view the fact that this model is circular, and that this circularity is inescapable within this model.

"We become . . . conscious of the consciousness of our consciousness only by making the latter a second time into an object, thereby obtaining consciousness of our consciousness, and so on *ad infinitum*. In this way, however, our consciousness is not explained, or there is consequently no consciousness at all, if one assumes it to be a state of mind or an object and thus always presupposes a subject, but never finds it. This sophistry lies at the heart of all systems hitherto, including the Kantian."<sup>16</sup>

Needless to say, the reflection-theory does not merely rest upon an inappropriate style of thought; it has some basis in the actual phenomenon of the Self. It does fix its sights on a feature of the Self that really does manifest itself: Knowledge, imprisoned in its experiences and beliefs concerning what it encounters in the world, breaks out of this seemingly all-embracing worldliness and becomes a theme and a question to itself. When it does so, it knows that it alone can make itself sure of itself, and consequently, that it is the subject of its own consciousness of being a Self. We can very well describe this act as reflection. It also makes good sense to look for what makes any other sort of reflection possible. Nonetheless, it still presupposes selfhood in a more primordial sense. This primordial selfhood first allows a Self to work itself free from its connection with the world and to grasp itself explicitly as what it must have been previously, namely, knowledge that what it is, is knowing subjectivity. The possibility of reflection must be understood on the basis of this primordial essence of the Self. The theory of reflection proceeds in the opposite direction and explains the Self as an instance of the reflective act. Consequently, it interprets the primordial, but obscure essence of the Self with the help of the manifest, but secondary phenomenon of reflection.

6. *Nachlass*, 356. Fichte's works, (ed. I. H. Fichte) hereafter will be cited as *WW*, followed by volume number. J. G. Fichte, *Schriften aus den Jahren 1790-1800*, ed. Hans Jacob (Berlin, 1937), will be cited hereafter as *Nl.* (for *Nachgelassene Schriften*).

7. *Opus Postumum*, Akademieausgabe, Vol. 20, p. 270.

Fichte's insight has far-reaching consequences. When we watch how Descartes goes about obtaining the foundation of metaphysics from the *ego cogito*, we can sense his astonishment over this unique mode of knowledge. The expressive and univocal nature of "*ce Moi*" provoked Leibniz' astonishment at the incomparable nature of philosophical certainty. Kant spoke of the Self in the same tone. He sees in it the index of a "a sublime faculty, elevated far above all sensory intuition," a faculty that "looks out onto an infinity of representations and concepts it has itself fashioned."<sup>7</sup> "Sublimity" means for him an experience that goes beyond the limits of comprehensibility.

Nonetheless, Kant did not infer from his own astonishment that the Self is enigmatic or hides some secret. From the viewpoint of finite, worldly knowledge the Self does indeed seem purely and simply astonishing. In itself, however, it is completely clear and the most familiar thing of all, once the nature of knowledge has been clarified. The Self alone makes it possible for us to become familiar with any other item. For this reason, Kant did not see it as philosophy's task to interpret the structure of the Self, any more than Descartes and Leibniz did, nor does he perceive the problems encountered in a way of thinking that *does* understand why this is philosophy's task.

Fichte gave the theory of self-consciousness an entirely new status. A gap, perhaps even an abyss, opens up between the "Self" and what makes the Self intelligible. From now on philosophy's task is to traverse this gap. The reflection theory, which expects the phenomenon of the Self to furnish its own explanation, far from bringing this gap fully into view, ends up making it disappear. We must, therefore, look for another theory that can arrive at the basis of the phenomenon of selfhood. We cannot find it until self-consciousness has been more completely described and we have experienced the perplexity produced by any attempt to interpret it.

Fichte did experience this perplexity. In a certain sense it can be said that he never freed himself from it. The stages in the development of the Doctrine of Science are so many attempts to work out a theoretical explanation for the phenomenon, the problematic character of which he had come to understand; in other words, his chief aim was to grasp the possibility and the inner coherence of this phenomenon.

He articulated the key ideas of such a theory in three formulas: his effort to establish these governs the central part of his work. Each formula marks a stage in the history of his basic idea; moreover, each in turn revises its predecessors. At the same time they all result from his opposition to the reflection theory of self-consciousness. Fichte's language steadfastly resists the implications of this model and therefore has to make use of many metaphors that are very difficult to understand. What he says seems to show that our language favors the secondary or derivative interpretation of the Self. Language hides both the true state of affairs and the difficulties we

have in understanding it behind the facade of allegedly transparent turns of speech. Philosophy must work out a theory of self-consciousness in opposition to the language we quite naturally use in speaking about the Self, while nonetheless continuing to use language. This explains why Fichte's task was so difficult and why he never succeeded in elaborating his theory with complete clarity, even though this was his goal. Consequently, rather than communicating his discovery, he hid it in texts that are among the most opaque and refractory in the entire tradition. The interpreter has to expend the same effort Fichte applied to the issue itself if he wants to free this discovery from the thicket of incomplete manuscripts.

## II

The basic notion of the *Doctrine of Science* in 1794 occurs in the form of the thesis: "The Self posits itself absolutely and unconditionally."<sup>8</sup> With this thesis Fichte gave extreme expression to the pathos of freedom. His contemporaries took the thesis to be justifying the ideals of the French Revolution, to be expressing the decision to bring the world under the control of reason, or, finally, as the Jacobins' principle, to tolerate nothing other than one's own work. Human liberation and the triumph of philosophical theory seemed to them to have been one and the same event.

It is true that Fichte's life was made up of such experiences and also that his thinking arose from them. What made him into a philosopher was the desire to understand freedom. However, it was not simply by an act of will that he became a thinker to whom we too can still listen. The Revolution did not become theory thanks to the trumpet-blast of Fichte's talk about the absolute Self, but through the idea proclaimed in it. This idea must, and can, speak for itself.

If we hear only the pathos in the formula "the Self posits itself," then Fichte's insight is distorted. If we pay attention to the latter, then the pathos is eliminated and the formula takes on the look of a dilemma. Fichte's formula does not refer to some matter-of-fact that is as clear as daylight, a fact to which one would have only to point in order to be on firm ground. Rather, the formula comes to hand when we consider that we cannot avoid assuming a ground or basis that vanishes when we try to grasp what all of us see when we come to know ourselves by means of the tiny word "I."

The formula "the Self posits itself" is the negative image of the reflection model whose defects Fichte had recognized.<sup>9</sup> The reflection-theory began

8. *WW* 1, p. 98; or *Fichte, Science of Knowledge (Wissenschaftslehre), with the First and Second Introductions*, ed. and trans. Peter Heath and John Lachs (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970), pp. 99, hereafter cited as Heath and Lachs.

9. Fichte and Wolfgang Cramer share a concern about the transition from a cri-

with a Subject-Self and was therefore compelled to presuppose its existence. However, it became evident that no self-consciousness becomes intelligible when the subject turns its intentional focus back upon itself. This suggests that we should replace the presupposition of this defective theory with its opposite. Accordingly, there would not be any Subject-Self prior to self-consciousness; rather, the subject, too, first emerges at the same time as the whole consciousness expressed in the identity “I = I.” The whole of self-consciousness cannot be derived from the subject-factor. Hence, it will not emerge from any one of its factors, but simultaneously with them all, in a trice, as it were, or, *εξαίφνης*, as Plato had already taught in the case of the highest knowledge.<sup>iv</sup>

When Fichte says that the Self posits itself, he has in mind this immediacy, the fact that the entire Self emerges all at once. “It is only through this act and exclusively by means of it, that is, by acting upon another act, with no other act of any kind preceding this latter act, that the Self originally comes to be for itself.”<sup>10</sup> Thus we have no basis for objecting that *something* which does the positing must precede the act of positing. The Self is the positing, it is the act through which it comes to be for itself, through which a Subject-Self becomes aware of itself as Object-Self.

The Self’s act of positing is a positing pure and simple. Consequently, it does not take place by means of something already posited beforehand or with reference to anything of that sort. “The Self posits itself absolutely, that is, without any mediation.”<sup>11</sup> Some other mode of positing might merely cause an act of knowing to become self-conscious; in that case, it would yield the same result as reflection and would leave the Self equally unintelligible. Hence, the Self must be thought of as a distinctive and unique instance of absolute positing. Fichte’s term “positing,” which he never defined, is well suited to formulate both these points at once: First, something emerges absolutely without having previously existed and, second, in emerging it enters into a relation with knowledge. What posits *itself* absolutely comes to be for itself without requiring any further basis.

This shows that there is more to be seen in the thesis that the self posits itself absolutely than hubris and presumption; otherwise, we could not even begin to credit Fichte with a serious concern for truth. It can be read as the intelligible attempt to explain something whose existence no one can doubt—the reality of self-consciousness. Even in his later philosophy, in which he abandoned the high pathos of his earlier works, Fichte never had occasion to doubt that the considerations which led to the early version of

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tique of theories that consider knowledge as a relation to a theory of knowledge as production. See Cramer, *Die Monade* (Stuttgart, 1960), p. 56, 60, and *Das Grundproblem der Philosophie. Beilage zu “Diskus,”* (Frankfurt am main, s.d.), p. 59, fn.

10. *WW* 1, p. 459; or Heath and Lachs, p. 34.

11. *Nl*, p. 357.

the *Doctrine of Science* were legitimate. Nonetheless, he thoroughly revised this theory. We should look for the reasons behind this revision in the defects attached to the theory itself, not in the external motives. We shall find them by investigating more closely the structure of a Self that *is* nothing other than the act of *positing* itself.

We must first of all take note of a formal distinction between the theory of "positing" and the reflection theory of the Self: The act of *positing* also implies a relation, that is, the relation between an act of production and its product; however, while the *relata* of reflection are of equal value, as regards their content, the opposite is true in the case of "positing." The Subject-Self is identical with the Object-Self. The reflection-theory is not obliged to assign any significance to these terms over and above the distinct positions they hold in the cognitive relation. To be sure, it also fails to make intelligible how this relation comes above. Each of the two terms already presupposes the relation. It is quite different in the case of *positing*. The act of production is here taken to be a real activity<sup>(e)</sup>, while the product is taken to be the knowledge of this act. Fichte does assert that both become actual simultaneously. The activity does not exist unless its product emerges at the same time. The activity is related to the product not as an impetus to the movement it causes, but as an electrical current to its magnetic field. Nonetheless, it is obvious that the activity must be distinguished from its product. This product alone is henceforth counted as knowledge; on the other hand, the activity can be interpreted as the basis of knowledge only if this basis is also included in the knowledge, that is, if the activity is *positing* "for itself."

This is one of the assumptions behind Fichte's subsequent transformation of his theory. The fact that knowledge and the basis of knowledge within self-consciousness are distinct from one another at all is what makes it possible for us to separate them radically from one another, so that the basis of knowledge within the Self is no longer the object that is known. Fichte took this radical step only after making several intermediate attempts. In the 1794 version of the doctrine he still draws no consequences from the difference between the *relata* in the concept of the Self. This suggests that "Self" is present wherever an active impulse turns back upon itself and in this way becomes an "action performed upon itself." In this case we are in fact considering the knowledge involved in self-consciousness as the encounter between the act turned back upon itself and its own activity. We can see that elements of the reflection theory are now insinuating themselves into Fichte's counter-proposal. The reflexive relation is not taken to be the product of *positing*, even though the concept of the *positing* actually requires this; instead, it appears as the actual performance of the act of *positing*. In proposing this Fichte is still loyal to his counter-model to the reflection theory, inasmuch as he does not start by bringing the agent as knower into the picture. Knowing is still meant to emerge only from the act of production. However, we do not yet see how we can use the productive act's encounter with itself to make this knowledge intelligible. Were we to try to in-

terpret the selfhood of the Self in terms of this act of production, however, we would have to do this.

Fichte has serious reasons for asserting that the action which leads to consciousness of the Self is the real object of this consciousness. The experience we have when achieving self-consciousness suggests these reasons. We can be required to achieve this.

This means, however, that we presume that this achievement is in our power absolutely and at all times. Insofar as we actually attain it, we know that the achievement has to be attributed to ourselves alone. No one else can ever say "I" to us and make any sense whatever. Self-consciousness is consciousness of an act. The formula, "the self posits itself," tries to accommodate this circumstance as thoroughly as possible. If what we are aware of when we act were not the actual reality of this act, then how could such consciousness be called self-consciousness?

This argument has considerable persuasive force; nonetheless it is spurious. A consciousness that can be summoned or entreated cannot become actual solely by virtue of this summons. Its entire structure must already be present, implicitly or potentially. Whom would the summons reach if the case stood differently? What is already present surely has to be such as to allow that act of appropriation which the summons tries to initiate. It might also be the case that an activity is already inherent in the very person who is summoned. This activity might explain why the appropriation has the character of an act. However, even in that case the act of appropriation remains a result made possible by that other, prior, activity. The selfhood of the Self is prior to any appropriation. If the experience of being a Self<sup>vi</sup> implies an activity, this does not mean that selfhood and activity are identical. We reached a similar result in the case of reflection. The possibility of reflection, although it is based on the Self, does not explain the Self.

There is another argument that lends greater support to the assertion that to be a Self is to perform an act. In the preceding discussion the Self's activity showed up as one of its essential *possibilities*. We cannot speak this way if it should turn out that the demand for an act, that is, for active self-appropriation, is inherent in every instance of being a Self. If the Self is essentially subject to a demand, then its relationship to the act is rooted in its own primordial nature and is more than a mere possibility. Fichte was convinced that this *is* how matters stand. This conviction did not immediately find a well-defined place within his theory of self-consciousness.

### III

We have seen that Fichte's earlier theory that the Self posits itself successfully avoids the circularity of the reflection-theory. His theory does not presuppose the whole Self, while trying to explain the whole in terms of one of its factors. Nonetheless, it points to what lies behind self-knowledge,

without leading us back to it. This defect did not remain hidden from Fichte for very long. He corrected it by expanding the first basic formula of the *Doctrine of Science*. Starting in 1797 it reads: "The Self posits itself absolutely *as* positing itself."<sup>12</sup>

Anyone who is aware of the difficulties in the first formula sees right away that the new addition emphasizes that the result of the act of positing is an instance of knowledge. The "as" here means the same as the Greek  $\hat{\eta}$ , the particle of representation < as in Aristotle's phrase  $\tau\ddot{o}\ \hat{\eta}\ \hat{\eta}\ \hat{o}\nu$  (being *qua* being). > All intentional meaning means something in a definite way; every instance of explicit knowledge knows something about a specific item and therefore recognizes it "as" this. When Fichte stresses that only the new formula in its entirety fits the essence of the Self, he is saying that this essence can only be understood as a mode of knowing. "The intuition of which we are speaking here, is a self-positing *as* positing . . . in no way, however, a mere positing."<sup>13</sup> Self-determination is a universal phenomenon of Nature. Life even displays an activity that reverts into itself;<sup>14</sup> but, neither Nature nor Life is the same as the Self. Thus, the specific difference between Nature and Freedom hinges on this one property, namely, that the positing of the Self posits itself "as" positing and is thereby knowledge of itself.

In order to show that his formula must be expanded, Fichte uses the same argument he had used against the circularity in the reflection theory: If the Self were not for itself, then it would have to be for an Other. Then this Other would actually be the Self. We would never arrive at a self-determination that possesses knowledge of the Self.

This line of argument is compelling; the expansion of the basic formula was indeed unavoidable. However, the expanded formula leads to a new problem. The particle of representation "as" designates a three-term relation: Something (1) represents something (2) as something (3). We shall have to ask what roles these three factors are meant to play in the Self that posits itself.

The old formula already left ample room for questions of this sort, although it did not force them upon us. Our best procedure would be to begin by posing these new questions in terms of the old formula. According to the latter, the Self is supposed to posit itself. Let us assume that the familiar difficulty did not arise and, therefore, that what results from the Self's active production could count as knowledge. What sort of knowledge would this be? Would it be the intuitive presence of the agent of production

12. *WW* 1, p. 528. <As far as the actual wording is concerned, this formula already appears in the 1794 *Doctrine of Science*. The reason for asserting that it is to be assigned to the 1797 *Doctrine of Science* is discussed on pp. ff. below. This formula already appears in the 1794-1795 *Doctrine of Science*.>

13. *Ibid.*

14. *WW* 1, p. 274; or *Heath and Lachs*, p. 241.

or an idea of the Self that is actively producing? The second case is obviously excluded. For the mere idea of the Self lacks what every self-consciousness possesses, namely, the certainty of its own existence. If the Self were to posit itself only as the concept of itself, then it would be essentially incapable of gaining any certainty of its *own* existence. Every Self would find its realization in the notion of selfhood in general, without ever being sure in any one case that a Self, to say nothing of its own Self, actually exists. F. H. Jacobi suspected that Fichte's Self is a phantom.<sup>15</sup> The idea that the product of the Self is a mere concept would turn the Self into the absolute phantom, so to speak. This suggests that we should take the positing of the Self to be an intuition of itself. Nonetheless, this option faces difficulties of its own. Intuitions without concepts are blind. The present case shows once again how widely this Kantian principle can be applied. Were we to interpret self-knowledge only as a matter of the Self's looking in upon itself, we would be locking it up in Auerbach's cellar. How can it ever come to understand that it catches sight of itself, if it cannot also have an understanding that it is a Self and, thus, possess a concept of itself? The second variant of the circularity in the reflection theory prohibits us from interpreting the Self solely as an intuition of itself.

If we were forced to choose between these two possibilities, namely, that the Self posits itself either as a concept or an intuition, then we would without hesitation decide in favor of the lesser paradox and hold that the Self is an intuition of itself. However, the expanded formula releases us from this necessity: "The Self posits itself absolutely as positing itself." This formula implies that the Self possesses knowledge of what it is. The Self recognizes the act of positing; moreover, what it posits is precisely this knowledge. Hence we must assume that the Self includes a conceptual factor and an intuitive factor. Thanks to the first, it recognizes itself in terms of its *essence*; thanks to the second it can know that it is *actual* as something positing. Thus, self-consciousness is intuition and concept at the same time. "This is the characteristic feature of this system in comparison even with the Kantian system."<sup>16</sup>

Fichte's first formula was based on the insight that we cannot derive self-consciousness from one of its factors or moments alone.<sup>vii</sup> The product of positing must emerge at the same time that the act of producing is performed. The expanded formula gives special emphasis to the immediacy implied in the phrase "at the same time," for it asserts that the Self has no knowledge of itself unless the intuition and the concept of the Self are inextricably bound

15. Jacobi to Fichte, in *Die Schriften zu J. G. Fichte's Atheismusstreit*, ed. H. Lin-dau (Munich, 1912), p. 189; or in Fichte, *Gesamtausgabe*, Series 3, Vol. 3, pp. 224–55.

16. *Nl*, p. 365.

together with one another. They are "equiprimordial."<sup>17</sup> When Fichte says that the Self is "Subject-Object."<sup>18</sup> he wants to stress the intensity and immediacy of the Self's internal unity.

It looks as though Fichte has now succeeded in making his counter-proposal to the reflection theory of the Self both complete and unassailable. The Self's activity results in a self-contained item of knowledge, not merely in a rebounding against itself. Nonetheless, Fichte's growing awareness of the problem which led him to the new formula forced him to revise the theory further. This second revision goes even further than the first. Two arguments make it clear why it was necessary:

1. The productive force of the *positing Self* must accomplish more on the new formula than on the old. It must generate in a single instant both self-possession and self-knowledge. We cannot explain *how* it can do this, since every instance of knowledge already exhibits the very duality of concept and intuition that we are trying to explain. Now, however, the Self is supposed to posit itself "as" itself. If the Self is that productive force, then it would have *to be able* to see *how* the twofold character of its self-knowledge arises from it. In light of Fichte's own reflections, this raises the surprising and, in many ways, decisive question of whether the Self, in the final account, *is* defined in terms of "positing itself."

2. What has just become evident on the side of knowledge can be shown equally well on the side of production. The product here is knowledge as the union of an intuition and a concept of the relevant activity. If knowledge is completely determined by these two factors, and if they are the product of an act of production, must this act also be what is known in that product? The formula "the self posits itself" requires that this be the case. Once the second variant of this formula has been developed, however, it turns out that it too must be brought under scrutiny.

In this way, we form an idea of an active ground existing prior to the active Self, a ground that explains the equiprimordial unity of the factors in the Self, but is not itself present in the Self. The term "Self" refers not to this ground, but only to its result. For "Self" means to be for oneself. However, the Self does not focus explicitly on what makes its unity possible, even though this latter is its source. Such an idea would be in harmony with the two arguments that force us to establish a distinction between the Self as product and the Self as activity, a distinction that Fichte had not foreseen up to this time. This idea would have still another advantage: if we interpret a

17. *WW* 2, p. 442. This term was introduced into contemporary thought by Husserl. In his work, as in Heidegger's, it has a polemical accent addressed against the deductive claims of Idealism. This makes it all the more remarkable that it was first used by Fichte and, indeed in his explanation of the structure of the self.

18. The expression occurs in this form for the first time in *WW* 2, pp. 444, 448.

Self in this way, we can establish an equivalence between the conceptual and the intuitive factors. That is, if the Object-Self is the primordially productive activity, priority in the knowing Self rightly belongs to intuition, since the productive force would be given in intuition. The sole contribution of the concept is to permit us to know this force for what it is. In the case of a Self, in which the concept and the intuition of the Self are equivalent representations of a single activity, we could determine the intuitive activity itself by means of the concept, not only as an idea, but also in its mode of activity. This possibility, moreover, is quite encouraging as far as the foundations of practical philosophy are concerned, since moral consciousness is the experience of an idea that results in an activity and is therefore something quite different from conceptual knowledge of that activity.

#### IV

For these reasons, in the *Doctrine of Science* of 1801, Fichte substituted a new formula for the original one. From now on self-consciousness is: "an activity in which an eye is inserted."<sup>viii</sup> This formula uses a metaphor when it speaks of the "eye" of the Self. This does not mean that in using it Fichte retreats into speculative poetry. He is simply trying to communicate a sophisticated insight that cannot be formulated in traditional language, whether philosophical or popular.

Fichte's first formula was a rejoinder to the theory that the Self consists in reflection. The new formula, the third in this sequence, must also be understood as a rejoinder to Fichte's own philosophical past. It expressly contradicts the interpretation Fichte gave his basic idea in his early doctrine.

To see this, we need only notice that knowledge of the Self, according to the first formula, was "posited", where now this knowledge is "inserted" or "installed." The passive voice has taken over from the active. This indicates that we have to assume yet another activity which is prior to the activity that has become insightful by virtue of the eye; it is through this prior activity that the latter becomes an activity endowed with sight. However, we have not yet fully characterized the nature of the contrast between this and the earlier doctrine. The use of the passive voice would at first merely imply that an eye *comes to be* inserted into the activity. Yet, starting in 1801, Fichte typically forms the passive with "be" and not with "become." An eye *is* inserted into the activity. This nuance sharpens the sense of his new formula. It emphasizes that the activity can never be found unless the eye is also present: If the eye *comes to be* inserted, then the activity takes place before it contains the eye. If the eye *is* inserted, then activity and eye together form a single essence. The eye is related to the act not as an ornament is to a body, but as the heart is to life. Fichte's motives are still those originally in play in the first form of his insight, the same motives that became especially prominent in the second formula: The factors of the self cannot be separated from

one another. Every mediation in the Self presupposes the unity of its factors; thus, the theory must make sure that this unity does not break apart as a result of the definitions and deductions it furnishes.

In the later *Doctrine of Science* this unity of the factors in the Self forms the basis for a process that Fichte had already described as "reciprocal activity" quite some time before. On the one hand, it is through the eye that we gain knowledge of the act that is apprehended and interpreted. As such it is the basis of cognition. On the other hand, the eye has "taken root" in the act itself, but not in the form of a hindrance, inserted like a filling in a tooth or even like a thorn in the flesh. In that case, the act would be hindered by its vision. On the contrary, the act is a clear-sighted act that is positively determined by its eye; the eye conducts and steers the act by means of the concept. In this way the Self becomes the basis of ethical conduct. The formula for the activity of the eye can therefore also be put this way: "Force, into which an eye is inserted, which is indissociable from it; force of an eye, this is the character of the Self and of intellectual activity."<sup>19 ix</sup>

Until now I have been presenting the formula for the activity of the eye as a counter-sketch to the first formula. It was in fact fashioned in an attempt to eliminate the defects in the latter. However, these defects first became evident once Fichte had developed the second formula, which had already removed certain weaknesses in the first. Thus the gain achieved in the second formula must be conserved in the third. We must now consider whether this does occur, and, if so, in what way.

The first formula of 1794 had two parts. One part referred to an activity; the other, to its product. The third formula as well only mentioned two terms: "activity" and "eye." Nonetheless, these are interpreted in such a way that the greater richness of the second formula is immediately entailed. The "as" of representation, the peculiar feature of the 1797 formula, can easily be obtained from these two terms. All we need to do is to determine the sense of the phrase "being inserted" a bit more precisely. We might think that this eye is inserted in the act just as an ivory eye is inserted in the marble head of a statue. In this case, the look of the eye would proceed outward from the act into the distance. Fichte, however, wants to say that the eye is inserted in the act in such a way that its look is directed upon the act itself. "Inserted" in this context also means "submerged within." Thus act and eye become a world unto themselves. The activity is clear and bright in virtue of the eye's look. This light which illuminates the activity does not break into it from outside, nor does it stream forth from it. The activity of the eye is a world-of-light with impermeable boundaries. Because of this, every spatial

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19. *WW* 11, p. 18. The passages containing the eye formula in the 1801 *Doctrine of Science* (*WW* 2, pp. 19, 37) occur in a somewhat different context. This difference corresponds to an alteration in the system of the *Doctrine of Science* from which we can abstract in the present connection.

model fails, together with any language fashioned to describe the spatial world.

It is only by thinking of the activity of the eye in this way that we can acquire an idea of the Self and its being for itself. It then becomes clear that the eye which catches sight of the activity must at the same time see itself. For the activity is essentially an activity of the eye; thus, the activity can only be seen at the same time as the eye is seen. The idea of a look that sees itself constantly fascinated Fichte from 1801 until his death in 1814. He wanted to express it in increasingly clear terms as the problem of philosophy and to develop its far-reaching consequences. Evidence for this comes from the following still-unpublished passage in a manuscript that was probably written in the summer of 1812.<sup>20</sup> "August 18. Holidays. In a dream a task shone forth quite brightly to me. Seeing is an eye seeing itself . . . Self-seeing eye = reflection of a life, of self-manifestation<sup>x</sup> which remains confined in itself and its facticity." In other words, the relationship the Self has to itself<sup>x</sup> amounts to knowledge existing for itself and manifest to itself; at the same time, however, this knowledge remains a matter of fact which can be used to explain everything else except its own existence. It continues to exist without being able to penetrate its existence with its own light. If the eye is going to be able to recognize itself, to be truly "for itself," then its look must also include the same factors as "positing" did according to the second formula: The eye must have in its sight the activity-of-the-eye *as such*. Thus an intuitive factor and a conceptual factor must be distinguishable within its look. This look is (a) the activity, insofar as (b) it is experienced as being intuitively present and thus as actual. It is, furthermore (c) the activity conceived (d) according to its specific concept. It is a matter of controversy as to whether this last distinction is indispensable or whether it is sufficient to specify three factors. Fichte constantly brings up four factors. In any event, it is only after we have expanded the interpretation of the third formula in this way that we can think of a reciprocal determination taking place in the Self, as a result of which it is primordially both theoretical and practical self-consciousness.

Accordingly, the eye inserted in the activity includes intuition and concept at the same time. Only then can it be wholly inward to the act and, at the same time, to its cognitive relation to itself; only then can it be understood as self-consciousness. Fichte's third formula, combined with the four factors involved in positing *as* positing, now seems to be free of errors.

Nevertheless, just this combination conceals a new problem. To speak of the look that sees itself and in each case is already this act of seeing does in-

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20. In the Berlin Fichte-manuscripts, Kapsel 4, 7. I am very much obliged to Dr. Hans Jacob of the Fichte-Archiv of the *Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften* for his abundant help. We still have not reached sufficient clarity concerning the deciphering of the words in parentheses in the text.

deed preserve the original unity of the factors of the Self. The new formula stresses the Self's relation to itself and, like the first formula, makes this the crucial feature of the Self.

Can it, however, elucidate this self-relation? It would have to do so by using the four elements contained in the consciousness of the look *as* look. Now, these moments are certainly indispensable; but do they also sufficiently explain the relation consciousness has to itself? This in no way seems to be the case. A concept that determines an intuitive datum can naturally refer explicitly to what is intuitively given. However, this in no way yields a *self*-relation of the intuition. Rather, the concept presupposes its subject, that is, the subject that thinks it and uses it to understand the intuition. The concept by itself will never suffice to make this subject the very datum given in the intuition. Furthermore, a concept clearly does not become self-referring by means of the corresponding intuition. This is a trivial point. The distinction between givenness and consciousness of the given "as" such and such was no more than the presupposition behind the Self's relation to itself; in no way did it already define the Self. Self-consciousness exists by means of this distinction, but not as an arbitrary instance of it.

We might now think that it is sufficient to call the look of the eye, a look directed upon itself, a special case in which the relation of intuition and concept becomes a self-relation. This is not enough, however. We must also show how the self-relation of the eye's activity in this case is at work both in the intuition and in the concept. The relationship itself, and not only the content, must exhibit the peculiar character of this self-relation. If this were not the case, then it would remain quite arbitrary as to how the eye's activity knows itself; the means by which it achieves knowledge of itself would not be in its possession or included within its unified and coherent structure. The result would be a situation that, more than any other, Fichte seeks to avoid: The Self would not be for itself, but only for a higher Self. But, in that case, self-consciousness would not be possible at all. Fichte thinks that he is doing justice to this necessity when he adds a fifth factor to the four mentioned previously: (e) the immediately reciprocal relation between intuition and concept. If the knower gains insight into any state of affairs whatsoever, then he elucidates the intuition of this through a concept or he gives content to the concept of it through an intuition. The concept is never related to the intuition in virtue of itself, or vice versa. This is what happens, however, in the case of self-consciousness: A concept is always actualized from the start and grasps itself as such; intuition is insightful recognition which does not require any mediation by a concept. This decisive peculiarity intrinsically characterizes the intuition and the concept of the Self. However, since intuition and concept have been introduced as separate features of self-consciousness, the character of selfhood peculiar to them must also be

counted as a separate factor. Consequently, self-consciousness is henceforth thought of as the synthesis of five factors.<sup>21</sup>

In articulating this notion, Fichte once again employs *via negationis*, the method of definition by exclusion of the opposite: The relation between concept and intuition is meant to be the opposite of what it ordinarily is. The essence of the Self should be interpreted in this way. Also, in this way we really do make reference to the unmistakable uniqueness of the essence of the Self. However, is the latter so defined that its inner constitution becomes completely intelligible?

The answer to this question has to be "No." If we did understand the essence of the Self, then we would have to be able to reconstruct the whole starting from any one of its factors. For example, we would have to be able to see how the "I" develops a knowledge of itself by becoming conscious of the concept. However, this is impossible. Let us assume that a particular concept is well known. Furthermore, let it be granted that this concept determines an intuition and also that this intuition is given. In this case, our conceptual knowledge would remain incapable of confirming that it grasps *itself* in the given intuition, unless it was previously familiar with itself in some other way. Since this alternative must be excluded in the case of self-consciousness, the expectation that the Self is to be understood in terms of its conceptual character is not fulfilled. The second sort of circularity we found in the reflection theory of the Self reappears here on an entirely different ground: If the Self does not already know itself, then it can never achieve knowledge of itself.

Fichte did not pay the same attention to this objection that he gave to the first. The earlier objection had shown that the reflection-theory of the Self wrongly presupposes that the whole Self is present before that act of reflection, by virtue of which the Self is supposed to come about, is performed. Fichte put his own theory beyond the reach of this objection. Nonetheless, the second objection is not charging that every time we speak of the Self a self-relation is already present. Its point is rather that the Self must be able to know itself, in every self-relation, *as* the Self. It seems that such cognition can in every case only be a re-cognition, so that the argument continually turns in a circle. It is altogether possible that this circularity counts as an objection even to those theories which have eliminated the other defects of the reflection theory.

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21. Fichte also calls this pentadic structure the "synthetic period" (*Nl*, p. 529). It first appears in the *Doctrine of Science* of 1798. The following are important passages for the synthetic pentad: *WW* 2, p. 35; *WW* 10, pp. 48, 121, 296–297, 350 ff.

The traps set by this circle cannot be avoided unless the path Fichte took with his second formula is followed. His attention, however, was not focused upon these traps. His attention was occupied, instead, by the task of conceiving the Self without having to presuppose another, higher subject. This remains the case. We never find discussions in his work that try to do complete justice to the second objection and to the first. This sets a limit to Fichte's contribution to the theory of self-consciousness.

Nevertheless we can formulate a solution to this problem with means supplied by Fichte. The solution at the same time opens up interesting theoretical prospects. We already took the first step toward the solution when we showed that the reciprocal relation between the concept and the intuition of the Self must be attributed to self-consciousness without any mediation. If we begin by trying to build up this relationship from one of its members, its reflexive character can never be attained and we can never understand how self-consciousness exists for itself. We can easily infer from this that the relation between intuition and concept must have a special cognitive character of its own. Indeed, this relation seems to be the factor thanks to which self-consciousness is a form of knowledge at all. If it did not play this role, that of the cognitive core of the Self, how could self-consciousness be conceived as knowledge and indeed as immediate knowledge? We would then have to say that our knowledge of ourselves is inferred; hence the Self would not be given to itself, but would only have an indirect acquaintance with itself. This, of course, is logically possible; but, this conclusion is patently contrary to the phenomenon of the Self, which is the immediate and certain presupposition of all inferred knowledge.

Now it is certainly paradoxical to assume a state of knowledge in which there is no knowing subject. It seems clear that we can only speak of knowledge if we can also designate the agent who has knowledge. However, if the Self of the subject already has knowledge, then this allegedly self-evident principle cannot hold true without restriction. That is, if every item of knowledge really had a subject, the subject itself could not be an item of knowledge. Otherwise we would have to assume a subject of this subject and thus surrender to the infinite regress that Fichte so much feared. The idea of the Self would sink into the abyss. The paradox of subject-less knowing is preferable to that. If we take this paradox seriously, it is not astonishing that when we reach the central point, perhaps even the ground, of all knowing, we can no longer find the structures familiar to us from the way we describe cognition of individual states of affairs or derivative insights. People who try to work out a philosophical theory of the Self must consider the possibility that forms of explication germane to the world must be given up when we make our way back to the basic principles. If we regard such an idea as meaningless, then we will never reach the phenomenon "Self" and will never be able to advance the problems that the phenomenon poses. We will have

to chart our course by our prejudices, rather than by these problems themselves.

Needless to say, this is not meant as a defense of each and every assertion, including Fichte's, which ascribes some paradoxical knowledge to the Self. We have to specify the particular status of this mode of knowing. In Fichte's theory, it is the immediate reciprocal relation between concept and intuition in activity that by its essence possesses self-knowledge. He has three ways of designating this knowledge: He calls it the "as," the "self," or the "through" of knowledge.<sup>21</sup> Thus, the Self's immediate knowledge first makes possible the "as" of the concept. For by virtue of this immediate self-knowledge, intuition and concept stand immediately in relation to one another *within* the Self; they do not merely refer indirectly to a Self.<sup>22</sup> This relation can also be designated as the "self" of Selfhood, because by virtue of it the Self is related to itself in a self-sufficient way and has no need of any external standpoint.<sup>23</sup> We can also say that in knowledge of this kind the experience that the Self exists (intuition) and the consciousness of the Self "as" the Self (concept) depend mutually on one another, so that each is through or by means of the other; this knowledge, however, is "the absolute 'through' of both, the image of their absolute, living connection."<sup>24</sup> In any case this knowledge is for Fichte "Unity, Light," a knowledge that is "qualitatively absolute, something that can only be accomplished, but can in no way be grasped conceptually."<sup>25</sup> In using expressions such as these Fichte is still maintaining that the Self is "intellectual intuition." This thesis already occupied an important position in the first *Doctrine of Science*. It had excited much opposition and disagreement. Now its sense has become much less ambiguous: It was previously unclear as to whether intellectual intuition is simply our knowledge of the Self or is identical with the Self. Both propositions can be asserted at the same time and an objective connection between both must obviously be presumed. However, there can be no doubt that the phrase "intellectual intuition" refers primarily to the inner constitution of the Self and its mode of knowing.

Before we begin raising critical questions about Fichte's position, we have to grant that the position itself is quite different from an arbitrary thesis that covers over an unsolved difficulty. The thesis emerged over several stages of reflection, each in turn constituting a revision of its predecessors. Each stage corrected current ideas about the essence of the Self and made more profound conceptions which are nonetheless still insufficient. Step by step the peculiar, incomparable constitution of self-consciousness was brought into

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22. *WW* 10, p. 357.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 259.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 259.

view. However, an obscurity enters the scene along with this clarification: Although the constitution of self-knowledge came to be more and more distinctly apprehended, it also proved to be more and more difficult to grasp conceptually. We were forced to reject one image of the Self after another; this process ended by becoming an essential part of our knowledge of the Self. The propositions Fichte ultimately uses when he discusses the Self merely express in a paradoxical way his recognition that the Self eludes our attempts to construe its nature by means of concepts. This does not yet give us a sufficient criterion for an appropriate way of talking about the Self. We could even begin to suspect that this series of paradoxical expressions, each in turn outstripping the other, has not yet been exhausted. Indeed, the series could be infinite. In that case the phenomenon "Self" would make a laughingstock of all our efforts to define it. We could then ask ourselves whether the phenomenon itself has an infinite number of meanings or whether it is only the disproportion between the subject of knowledge and knowledge that is infinite. Fichte nevertheless has a second criterion at his disposal: Self-consciousness is properly defined by these paradoxical expressions if they allow us to interpret the system of knowledge derived from the Self. The Self is the subject of knowledge; hence, it must contain conditions that establish the inner connectedness of all knowledge. Anyone who can successfully develop this connection must have said something suitable about the Self, even though he cannot give his discourse either deductive form or make it into the description of an univocal fact. Thus the system of the *Doctrine of Science* is simultaneously an attempt to justify its own foundation.

Nonetheless, Fichte had good grounds for holding that this theory is inadequate. The unity of the Self would not be possible if the factors comprising its essence were not "inwardly" and indissolubly fitted together with one another and determined by one another. However, Fichte never succeeded in making it theoretically clear and unambiguous how they fit together. Even his later presentations of the *Doctrine of Science* are full of uncertainties. His plan to publish a new presentation of the *Doctrine of Science*, a plan he first announced in 1801, had to be postponed again and again, until it finally fell into oblivion.

Apart from the defects of which Fichte himself was aware, we should note that his doctrine of the Self makes use of certain terminological distinctions as though they were obvious, although they are in fact simply taken over from Kantian philosophy. For instance, we very much miss any analyses of the meaning of "intuition" and "concept," even though this is the fundamental antithesis, which, in 1796, becomes part of the formula for self-consciousness. Whether we use the methods developed by Hegel, by Husserlian phenomenology or by logical analysis, we can look forward to having an explanation of the conditions under which concepts such as these can be legitimately applied; Fichte was not in a position to furnish this sort

of explanation. In this way more light would be thrown on the structure that Fichte, to his permanent credit, discovered and developed.

Fichte persisted in the belief that at bottom only a single insight needs to be attributed to the Doctrine of Science. He wanted his doctrine, which was often presented in apodictic, harsh, and even violent terms, to force us to adopt the viewpoint made possible by this insight, and to show us that we can remain loyal to this insight when we set about constructing the system of philosophical knowledge. Furthermore, Fichte was greatly concerned in making this basic idea as clear as possible, just as clear as it had become for him. It seemed to him that once someone has grasped it he will devote all his efforts to reflecting upon it; he was also convinced that the insight will convey to him an unshakable certainty of the preeminence and dignity of a freedom accompanied by knowledge. Certainty of this kind does not, however, bring the serenity we get from indubitable knowledge. It only awakens a more intense desire to get to the root of this certainty in a theory that itself always remains open to amendment. What is closest to us, we ourselves, our self-knowledge, is the most obscure thing of all when we try to achieve discursive knowledge of ourselves. Fichte recorded this vital experience in a short manuscript. Even though many of the statements he makes in his lectures might be suspected of dissemblance, what he says here is immune to such suspicions. This manuscript is a series of three sonnets, written perhaps in 1812 and not destined for publication. They are the equivalent of a philosophical biography written in the language of the *Doctrine of Science*. In the second sonnet Fichte asks what gave him the power to pursue his philosophy of freedom without being diverted by the world's confused course, or by the crises in his personal life. The answer reads:

This it is. Since my look calmly projected into  
Urania's eye  
the deep, self-clear, blue, calm, pure flame of light;  
Since then this eye rests in my depths  
and is my being—the eternal One  
lives in my life, sees in my seeing.<sup>26</sup>

26. Two of the three sonnets were twice published in Fichte's works (WW 8, pp. 461–62; WW 11, pp. 347–48), together with the correct argument that Fichte "almost never expressed the essence of his philosophy more clearly." The version of the third sonnet in volume 11 is different from that in volume 8. The latter is, however, a verbatim rendition of the original, as is shown by a comparison with the manuscript of the third sonnet, the only manuscript at present accessible to us. The dating results from the paper, which stems from the Ebart paper factory. Fichte used this kind of paper in 1812 for the manuscripts of his lectures and, in all probability, had it at his disposal only a little before or later. The report of his dream (see p. 000, *supra*) is also written on this paper (according to the friendly information of Dr. Jacob).

Insight into the essence of Selfhood guides the Doctrine of Science. The essence of Selfhood is the eye's activity. Comprehending this activity was the task that "shone forth quite brightly" to the dreaming Fichte in the same year. When he speaks of this experience, he once again introduces obscure metaphors, this time in a poem whose stock of metaphors is quite paltry and conventional and thus easy to fathom. The eye of Urania, the Muse of astronomy and hence of the natural knowledge of the world, is the subject that possesses finite knowledge. Fichte became aware within this subject of that other kind of seeing which does not proceed out into the world, but diffuses a light in the eye itself, a light that lights up nothing, but is clear and bright to itself. We cannot kindle this light. For wherever we are, it is already burning. Thus we must be calm when it is shining: Nevertheless, we cannot catch sight of it if we are inactive. This light is not to be found in the absence of our vision. It is not caused by us, yet it is to be found only in the enactment of the "I." Thus we can say that the "flame of light" was "calmly projected" into the knowing subject.<sup>xiii</sup>

The sonnet talks about the insight that set Fichte on his path, using the language of the later versions of the *Doctrine of Science*. We know that Fichte first spoke of this insight in a quite different way. However, this does not exclude the possibility that even at that time he had the same issue before him, although his interpretation did not yet do it justice. "The unconditioned element in the Self," to which Fichte's earliest texts in theoretical philosophy lead,<sup>27</sup> becomes, twenty years later, nothing other than the "force in which an eye is inserted," the key concept of the later *Doctrine of Science*.

Fichte thought at first that the self-sufficiency of this active knowledge could only be interpreted as the act of freedom; however, he subsequently convinced himself that it is an act that is always, all along, in possession of knowledge. It cannot become knowledge through its own efforts. It follows that this act is the ultimate state of affairs which we can come to know as we make our way back to the fundamental principles; it is not the ultimate theme or topic of our inquiry. The "I" is not its own ground, nor is it free of the need for any further grounding. We must distinguish within it factors which, although distinct, are nonetheless indissolubly connected. We must, therefore, be allowed to search for the origin of this connection.

## V

In the later version of his *Doctrine of Science*, Fichte had the idea of grounding the Self in an Absolute; we cannot reach such a ground if we start from any other conception and try to make our way toward it. It might

27. *WW* 8, p. 425.

readily seem that this notion contradicts the crucial content of the early theory, namely, to be a call to freedom and the source of the conviction that man can depend on himself alone. The merit of Kant's critical philosophy, according to Fichte, was that it disclosed the reality of freedom. He was grateful until his death to his teacher Kant for having freed him from the determinism that dominated his youthful thinking. The ground of freedom—is that not a self-contradiction?

Many have thought so. They have interpreted the path Fichte took as one of accommodation, representing a falling-off from his great period. In fact, Fichte would hardly have decided to interpret freedom itself as the result of something other than freedom, if a new experience had not made him open to this conclusion. A controversy over the charge of atheism and, especially, a letter he received from Jacobi while he was in the midst of a difficult situation, set in motion a process that accelerated the transformation of his doctrine. We do not know if and when it would have been transformed had circumstances been different. A philosophy meant to convince others is dependent on the experiences of the person to whom it is evident and on the effect and the echo it finds in others. Nonetheless, Fichte did not deceive either himself or his audience when he later asserted, as often as possible, that the *Doctrine of Science* always remained the same at bottom. All the transformations it underwent simply brought greater clarity to the distinctive character and logical consistency of his original insight.

The thesis that freedom has a ground must not be confused with the assertion that freedom is illusory and that all action is guided only by drives and prejudices. The ground of freedom, for Fichte, is different from any external cause of actions, which is then only putatively free. In the *Doctrine of Science* freedom *itself* is understood in terms of a possibility that it does not itself control. Accordingly, this ground is, in turn, the condition that makes possible the autonomy of freedom. Moreover, this ground is not a goal that hovers before consciousness, inviting its free service. In the latter case, no matter how subtle our arguments might be, we would be thinking of freedom as a means to this end. For Fichte, freedom remains self-determination and does not occur for the sake of something else. Furthermore, the unity of the Self is not to be interpreted either causally or teleologically, any more than freedom is. Our rational existence is not based on something natural in us, or on something spiritual outside of us. Our own essence, the simple and still puzzling knowledge expressed in the word "I," arises from a ground that does not hinder freedom, but rather, makes it possible. It institutes a self-relation, by allowing a force to exist whose essence consists in vision. It is possible, indeed it is necessary, for us to interrogate freedom, without assigning philosophy a standpoint outside of freedom. In asserting this thesis Fichte was defending himself against Jacobi's philosophy of feeling and Schelling's philosophy of nature, his two

most important opponents. His later theory is no more a surrender of freedom than his early doctrine was testimony to man's hubris and vanity.

Kant had taught that such a ground of freedom is inconceivable, that the very question as to whether it exists is extravagant. Of course, he had his own ideas about such a ground, ideas incompatible with Fichte's. When he prohibited questions about the ground of freedom, he was thinking of a class of particular substances with the unusual property of being able to themselves *initiate* causal sequences. The ontology at work here is concerned more with finding confirmation in Newton's *Philosophia Naturalis* than in the inner constitution of the Self; it has not yet succeeded in making the Self its central theme. For Fichte "substance" is not a suitable name for the reality designated by "I," any more than it is for that condition on which the self rests and which we must take to be the source of its self-relation. Nonetheless, it makes good sense to think that when we try to get behind the power of vision<sup>xiv</sup> belonging to the Self, our ideas are simply extended into a void. This power of vision itself already strains against the expressive limits of our cognitive language. This version of Fichte's doctrine would match very closely an experience characteristic of the modern world.

Fichte, however, was convinced that his theory can yield insight into the ground of the Self; according to him, the Self is the manifestation of God. It looks as though Fichte is now furnishing a cause for freedom in just the way Kant viewed it and which cannot really be brought into harmony with Fichte's basic insight. Yet he was not suffering a mental lapse when he offered this explanation. Fichte wants to make the essence of the Self precise and intelligible with the help of the concept of God. This takes place as follows: Self-consciousness is an intimate unity arising from an inconceivable ground which the Self does not control. At the same time, the Self makes itself manifest to itself.<sup>xv</sup> It possesses itself as Self, and must acquire additional knowledge of itself in the course of performing its characteristic activity. Even the Doctrine of Science belongs, in the end, to the enactment of the Self. The result of this science which the Self has concerning itself is that to be a self is to be a unity emerging from a ground that the Self does not control. We must say, therefore, that this knowledge as well stems from the essence of the Self and that it appears on the scene when the Self completes itself. In this case we can interpret the Self as a *manifestation*. Even earlier it was a manifestation, but a manifestation of itself; now it makes manifest what grounds its *possibility* in advance of all knowledge. It has become clear that we cannot see directly into this grounding One. Now, however, we can understand it in terms of its effects. It allows selfhood, the essence of which is manifestation, to come into being, in order that it might become manifest as what cannot be grounded. Thus, this One manifests itself finally in the Self in the form of what manifests itself.<sup>28</sup> This is just what we mean when we

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28. We should take note that, in this way, those characteristics are ascribed to the 'Absolute' which in 1797 were those of the Self.

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speak of a living God.<sup>29</sup>

We can see that God and the Self are not externally linked together in this theory. The *Doctrine of Science* of 1804, more than any other work, tries to mediate them in a *docta ignorantia* of God's essence. Even a reader who is not inclined to accept this doctrine can still marvel at its profundity and its consistency. It deserves a comprehensive interpretation.

## VI

We have been reflecting on and elaborating Fichte's concept of the Self without considering either his total system or the philological problems of Fichte research. Nonetheless, one historical thesis ought to have been established in the course of the discussion, namely, that the path he took in moving from one version of the *Doctrine of Science* to the next is unified and that the sequence of the three formulas for self-consciousness is consistent. It makes sense for me to substantiate this thesis by referring to at least some aspects of the history of Fichte's development. These references are meant to show that this thesis would be confirmed, rather than refuted, by a detailed history of the motives behind the transformations of his work. They will also give us the opportunity to make the historical significance of this reconstruction more precise.

1. In the 1812 sonnet Fichte interpreted his own philosophical path as having begun with an original insight. Yet even here he did not say that he grasped the distinctive character, the importance, and the consequences of this insight from the first. Both of these facts correspond to what actually did take place. It was only later that Fichte succeeded in explicating his insight in a suitable way. Furthermore, he became aware of its genuine significance only a few years after it first appeared in his works. He came to it in the year 1797, at the latest, when he was writing the "Second Introduction" and the "Search for a New Presentation of the *Doctrine of Science*." However, these are probably simply a version of the improved presentation

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29. This shows that Fichte's later theory leads to the idea of a ground that cannot be eliminated, while, on the other hand, it is totally different from a "necessary Concept of Reason" (Kant). Fichte shares this element of his theory with the ontological proof of God's existence. Fichte's *docta ignorantia*, however, unlike the ontological proof, does not allow us to describe our knowledge of God as knowledge of the real instantiation of a concept. This is to the advantage of Fichte's position since he can take one of the intentions of the ontological proof more seriously than even Schelling could; that is, Fichte can describe God as what is genuinely real in our knowledge and, prior to that, in our consciousness of ourselves as moral beings. This yields a connection between the traditional onto-theology and the doctrine of the primacy of practical reason. It can also bring to light the presuppositions common to these two positions, presuppositions that were influential early on, but remain obscure. See Dieter Henrich, *Der ontologische Gottesbeweis* (Tübingen, 1960) and the comments on p. 266.

of the *Doctrine of Science* that Fichte had been giving in his lectures from 1796 on; we do not have either the manuscript or the student transcripts of this presentation. In these texts Fichte's awareness of the circular character of the reflection-theory and of his own counter-theory clearly emerges.<sup>30</sup> Next come the classical arguments in the introduction to the *Doctrine of Science* of 1798.<sup>31</sup> Although they are preserved only in a transcript, they nonetheless contain a highly sophisticated and conscious critique of all prior philosophical accounts of self-consciousness.

The *Doctrine of Science* of 1794 does not have the same degree of clarity. According to it, the Self posits itself absolutely. This implies that we can assert the immediate unity of its factors. However, Fichte did not initially place any emphasis on this unity. Instead, the system of 1794 used a duality to explain how the Self is for itself, where this feature is still understood as a direct consequence of its self-positing; the duality in question is the opposition between an activity that proceeds *ad infinitum* and another activity opposed to it. This theory fell victim to Hegel's unremitting polemic. It was, however, the most evanescent element in Fichte's attempt to explain his position. It has already disappeared from the 1797 presentation. From then on Fichte defined the act of absolute positing precisely in terms of its consequences. To posit oneself means to be, without further mediation, object and subject at the same time.<sup>32</sup> In this sense the act of positing can be called "Positing or Subject-Object," a term that Fichte first used in 1795.<sup>33</sup> It was only a little while later that this became the expression or a unity within the Self, a unity that does not require any mediation.

It can be shown that Fichte himself clearly recognized how unclear the 1794 *Doctrine of Science* was on just this issue. In 1802 he published a new edition of his first main work, expanding it only by a few additions and footnotes. The most important of these is added to Number 10 of the first section of part 1.<sup>34</sup> In this passage Fichte had originally discussed how the Self is essentially for itself. As the *Doctrine of Science* advanced further, it became clear to him that the genesis of this feature is not immediate; the activity of positing produces it only with the help of something opposed to it. The note abstracts from this and simply comments that the Self is *immediately* Subject-Object. By making this statement Fichte gives one chapter of his work an importance that it had not had in the orginal context. However, he had good reason to think that this was necessary.

3. Thus, Fichte's insight first emerged under conditions that are not identical with the arguments he later used to support it. The light in *Urania's eye*

30. *WW* 1, pp. 458-59; or Heath and Lachs, pp. 33-34).

31. *Nl*, p. 355.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 357.

33. *WW* 2, p. 444.

34. *WW* 1, p. 98; or Heath and Lachs, p. 99, fn. 4).

does not appear as a result of his critique of the reflection-theory. Hence, we have not yet clarified the genesis of his insight. In fact we have not yet even touched upon this history. Concerning this important theme we will simply note here that the idea of the Doctrine of Science probably arose from a combination of the following three ideas: After the success of his *Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation* (published in 1792) Fichte received a prestigious invitation to write reviews for the *Allgemeine Literaturzeitung*. This task forced him to come abreast of the current level of theoretical discussion and to spell out his own, unequivocal position. He worked out this position during the next half year and tried to substantiate it through the following arguments: (1) We can escape skeptical objections to Kantian philosophy if we pay attention to the fact that self-consciousness is not a substance and thus not an unknowable substance, but is knowledge and, indeed, unconditional knowledge.<sup>35</sup> (2) Moral philosophy, which must supply a proof of the reality of pure practical reason, can provide this proof only if it presupposes something unconditioned in consciousness. The refutation of theoretical skepticism must, therefore, employ the same means as the refutation of moral skepticism.<sup>36</sup> (3) The most authoritative contemporary attempt to construe Kant's doctrine as a system, that is, Reinhold's *Elementarphilosophie*,<sup>xvi</sup> is merely a set of sophisms. It cannot be anything else, since Reinhold understands consciousness only as a relationship among distinct factors. His attempt to construct a theory of the categories of pure thought shows us that a fundamental philosophy is possible only if everything in our mind "hangs together on a single chain." The deduction of the categories has to rest upon this supreme unity. This suggests that we should look for this unity in the Self's unconditioned nature. The latter, however, is not this unity, if even it merely furnishes the final, insuperable evidence of a relationship. Consequently, the Self must be thought of as the opposite of a relationship among factors that are *already in existence*. The Self is an unconditioned act.

A manuscript is extant in which we can follow the genesis of Fichte's original insight more closely than we can that of any of his other basic philosophical ideas. Kabitz published short extracts from it;<sup>37</sup> it will soon be published in the critical edition, under the title "Some Meditations concerning Elementary Philosophy."

The early form of Fichte's Doctrine of Science is thus the result of his critical appropriation of Reinhold. Anyone acquainted with the 1793-94 *Meditations* will see the structure of Reinhold's work still shining through

35. *WW* 1, pp. 11, 16.

36. *WW* 8, p. 425.

37. See W. Kabitz, *Studien zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der Fichteschen Wissenschaftslehre* (Berlin, 1902), now published in full in *Gesamtausgabe*, ed. R. Lauth et al., series II, Vol. 3.

the pages of Fichte's *Grundlage*, written in the early summer of 1794. By criticizing the weaknesses of Reinhold's work and by exploring the question of how to found a system true to the spirit of Kant, Fichte was led to the idea of a Self that posits itself absolutely. Consequently, this idea did not begin as a stroke of genius, but was the result of an attempt to solve certain theoretical difficulties. Nonetheless, in that period this idea remained totally subordinate to the task of getting beyond Reinhold, in the hope of defending Kant against the skepticism of Schulze<sup>xvii</sup> and thus insuring the primacy of practical reason at the same time. All the features attributed to the "absolute Self" can be understood if we keep this goal in mind. Fichte was not yet able to fix his sight, freely and independently of all contemporary questions, on the content of the insight he reached in this way. His students and the colleagues with whom he philosophized daily in Jena saw to it that he was soon able to do so. People were expecting him to spread the light of Kant's critical philosophy; at the same time he became the premier philosopher of the most cosmopolitan university of the day. He was surrounded by lively interest and passionate criticism. These would have stimulated even a man who was less bent on consistency and clarity than Fichte. Thus, Fichte's conception of his system was soon completely liberated from the models that Reinhold had originally furnished. He retained only the concept of the Self, the method for developing his system (not the method of its presentation), and many insights into subjective life. These became elements in Fichte's new presentation of his idea of a system, transmitted to us in the 1798 version of the *Doctrine of Science*.

We see that Fichte's original insight ushers in a new stage of reflection on the phenomenon of self-consciousness. Its genesis agrees quite nicely with this: Fichte achieved his insight by thinking through what Kant and Reinhold had done at the frontier of theoretical discussion of the Self as the principle of knowledge. However, he went on to push this insight beyond this frontier and to give it validity in its own right.

3. His new presentation of the *Doctrine of Science* expanded the formula of the Self: The Self posits itself absolutely *as* self-positing. We can quite readily survey the history leading up to this expansion. This addition of "as" follows objectively from an idea expressed in Fichte's review of Schulze's *Aenesidemus*: The faculty of representation exists *for* the faculty of representation.<sup>38</sup> The Self exists essentially for itself. It was only in 1798 that Fichte came to see that we can conclude from this that the Self possesses a twofold knowledge. His essays in the *Philosophische Journal* from the year 1797 still contain no hint of this. Fichte, however, did not straightforwardly draw even the weaker inference, namely, that each and every Self is explicitly in possession of itself.<sup>xviii</sup> Had he done so, he would never have been able to talk

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38. *WW* 1, p. 11.

about the Self striking against an obstacle or check that is supposed to put Self-consciousness into effect.

Nonetheless, the formula "The Self posits itself as positing" evolves logically out of the *Grundlage* of 1794. In this work Fichte teaches that since the Self is limited by a counter-positing, its own act of positing must take place in a twofold manner. The not-Self must be posited as limited by the Self; the Self, as determined by the not-Self.<sup>39</sup> The formula "positing as . . ." turns up here for the first time at the center of his thought. At first it means simply that the Self posits itself in a *determinate* and *particular* way, that is, not as Self in general. Moreover, the formula does not assert that this act of positing must lead to explicit consciousness of its peculiar nature. However, in the course of the work the formula does acquire this sense.<sup>40</sup> The act of positing, as it progresses, follows a course that corresponds to this sense; Fichte also calls this course "the law of reflection."<sup>41</sup> The original act of positing is elucidated through a sequence of new acts of positing and is hereby brought to self-consciousness. In the practical part of the Doctrine of Science this law of reflection is in fact defined as the direct result of the concept of Self. Fichte writes: "The Self is not meant to posit itself merely for some intelligence outside of it; rather, it should posit itself for itself, it should posit itself as posited through itself."<sup>42</sup> With this statement he reaches the 1797 formula. Nonetheless, this still does not become the basic formula for the whole Doctrine of Science. What it says is that the Self "should" posit itself as Self. This means that the Self is not already posited for itself all along.

4. "Force in which an eye is inserted,"—this third Fichtean formula also has its prehistory. We find the metaphor of the eye for the first time in the

39. *WW* 1, pp. 125, 127; or Heath and Lachs, pp. 122–23.

40. *Ibid.*, pp. 223, 227; or Heath and Lachs, pp. 199; 202.

41. Attention should be called to Fichte's use of the term "reflection." According to the *Grundlage* of 1794 it is a law of the Self to reflect upon itself, that is, to make its positings conscious to itself. This law follows from the essence of the Self, namely, to posit itself as determined, but it does not hold good for the first act of positing in the absolute Self. It is principally Reinhold's 'Theory of Representation' and Fichte's *Grundriss des Eigenthümlichen der Wissenschaftslehre* (1795) that have the law of reflection as their methodological presupposition. From 1801 onward, the Self is also conceived of on the basis of reflection, but now in terms of a concept of reflection that is directly opposed to the model of the theory that we have called "The Theory of the Self as Reflection." The basic form of knowing "reflects itself in itself . . . it does not, properly speaking *do* this, rather, it *is* this." (*WW* 2, p. 41). Fichte also speaks of the "basic reflex" in contrast to the achievement of reflection; this occurs in a particularly emphatic way in his letter to Schelling, sent on 15 January, 1802. (Fichte, *Briefwechsel, Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. H. Schulz, vol. 2 [Leipzig, 1925], p. 350).

42. *WW* 1, p. 274; or Heath and Lachs, p. 241.

1798 *Doctrine of Science*. This text does rest on Fichte's new insight that each and every Self exists essentially "for itself." This is exactly what Fichte first means when he speaks of the Self as an eye. The context makes it clear that this eye is the antithesis of a mirror.<sup>43</sup> The image in the mirror is an image only for one who sees it. In the Self, however, the mirror itself sees, it has become an eye. Thus, the images in this mirror are not images of something else for someone else. Its images are images of its own act of vision and it is these that the viewer also perceives. They are of and for himself. "The Self of the *Doctrine of Science* is . . . a self-mirroring mirror, is an image of itself."

This metaphor is still quite different from what it becomes in 1801. What is missing is the idea that the eye is "inserted" into an act. This idea is at first still quite distant from Fichte. He still derives the eye from the act of the positing Self. Two passages from the *System der Sittenlehre* (1798) and *The Vocation of Man* (1800) show us how he came to the new formula.<sup>44</sup> In these passages Fichte does say that the eye is inserted. The context in which this occurs is clearest in the text of the *Sittenlehre*. There the Self, as soon as it has an experience of itself, discovers in itself a drive to self-activity. This drive is blind; nonetheless, since it is a drive belonging to the Self, it must be appropriated to the Self that perceives it. This occurs when the Self brings this drive under the dominion of the concept and thereby makes it depend on the idea it has itself engendered. The *Sittenlehre* expresses this as follows: The forceful, conscious Self "tears itself away" from what is unconsciously given to it and so submits itself to the "sway of the concept."<sup>45</sup>

In *The Vocation of Man* Fichte makes use of the metaphor of the eye in the same context: "I . . . insert, as it were, eyes into the blind drive." Here again, it is still the Self that is responsible for the drive's having eyes. This corresponds to the idea expressed in the *Sittenlehre*. However, the Self brings about a situation in which eye and drive are intimately bound together with one another; it can easily be forgotten that this situation derives from an act performed by the Self. Drive and eye make up an active world complete in itself.<sup>46</sup> We cannot claim that Fichte intended to teach this in *The Vocation of Man*. Nonetheless, this is the direction in which his metaphor points.

Fichte later added an (undated) marginal note to the passage of the *Sittenlehre* on which the passage in *The Vocation of Man* is based. It reads: "Eyes were inserted into the One."<sup>47</sup> The marginal note was meant to give a new formulation for what occurs, according to the 1798 text, when the Self "tears loose" from the drive it discovers in itself. However, this addition completely changes the original tenor of this text. Eyes are now inserted in "the

43. *Nl*, p. 377.

44. *WW* 4, p. 33; fn.; *WW* 2, p. 249.

45. *Ibid.*

46. *Ibid.*

One." This phrase can no longer refer to the drive itself. That drive had its specific place in the system of the applied Doctrine of Science, which investigates how we come to have the experience of active self-consciousness. The "One," however, is minimally the pure active power of the Self; perhaps it already refers to the divine life discussed in the 1801 doctrine. It belongs, therefore, to the foundation of the entire Doctrine of Science. Fichte now says that eyes are inserted in *it*.

Accordingly, what we have to establish is that Fichte proceeded in the following way: He formed the metaphor of the eye in order to designate the essence of the Self which is closed up in itself. He first spoke about the "inserted" eye in the special context of the *Sittenlehre*. Here the metaphor, along with the idea that it implies, has become complete; however, it was still subordinate to the absolute act of the Self. Once this latter doctrine had been transformed, Fichte brought the metaphor back into the center of his Doctrine of Science. From then on it became the appropriate formula for his theory, since Fichte conceived the Doctrine of Science as a form of "learned ignorance" and therefore needed metaphors.

5. One of the most interesting tasks facing the interpreter of Fichte is to discover the reasons behind this transformation. We have seen that there were enough objective reasons for altering his interpretation of self-consciousness. These reasons could become effective only when other motives also pointed in this same direction. We cannot enumerate all of them here, but only give one indication that is immediately relevant to the theory of self-consciousness. Most interpreters will scarcely have anything to do with Fichte's assertion that the atheism controversy took him by surprise just when he was on the verge of completing the highest synthesis of philosophy, the synthesis of the intelligible and the sensible world. If people had known about this, they could not have denounced him for "Atheism!"<sup>47</sup> This self-interpretation is distrusted and taken for a justification after the fact. We should reexamine this opinion, for the following reasons: In *The Doctrine of Science* of 1798 Fichte did not alter only the formula for self-consciousness; he also gave the theory an entirely different structure. The system of the *Sittenlehre* was taken up into the foundation itself, so that ethical consciousness became basic to the real and fundamental structure of the Self. When this happened Fichte had to change his description of ethical consciousness as well, for in the *Grundlage* of 1794 ethical consciousness was subordinate to the concept of the Self. This concept yields first of all the concept of knowledge; the ethical task was its nobler complement. The new description also starts with the theory of knowledge. Now, however, this theory serves only to introduce the definition of ethical knowledge. Once this definition is achieved, we can retrospectively obtain the stages of cognition

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47. *Briefe*, ed. Schulz, vol. 2, p. 323.

from it and in this way actually deduce them for the first time.<sup>48</sup> The concept of ethical life, however, was taken to be the synthesis of the two worlds.<sup>49</sup> Fichte is thoroughly aware that this description is more profound and better suited to Kant's idea than the description he had offered earlier.

With this theorem, which we have simply sketched here, Fichte has already brought the concept of self-consciousness into a position comparable to the one it occupies in 1801. Self-consciousness is manifestation; but its self-manifestation is simply the appearance of a ground to which knowledge cannot penetrate. According to the doctrine of 1798 self-consciousness manifests the law of an intelligible world; according to that of 1801, it manifests the Divine life. Fichte could therefore start from the ideas of 1798 when new experiences and additional reasons induced him to refashion the entire Doctrine of Science. Neither the new formula for his basic idea nor the new version of his system should be understood as merely prudential accommodations.

## VII

Let us conclude by looking ahead to some further questions. The present essay on Fichte's original insight did not treat all his propositions concerning self-consciousness. For example, we had to omit the important question of the relation between Selfhood and individuality. Whenever any one uses the term "I" he means this particular being who is conscious of himself. Each person can only speak of himself as "I." It makes no sense to call to another "You I there!" The technical philosophical terms "Self" or "Ego" cannot be introduced into ordinary language. To establish this point certainly does not imply that the terms are illegitimate. It means that a problem has to be emphasized. The consciousness expressed by the term "I" individuates; however, it does not do so the way warts on the chin do, or a place on a sports team does. Furthermore, this consciousness at the same time also universalizes, and this feature deserves the most careful consideration. *Each one* is individualized through the "I." Insofar as he says "I," each one knows himself to be this one individual person. And, every person knows himself to be "this particular One," when he says *the very same thing* of himself, namely, "I." This unity of individuality and universality, although it cannot be further specified, can easily be interpreted, if we decide to take it simply as a manner of *speaking*. It can then be understood as an act of referring, an indicator, as, Russell, for example, argues. This merely sets aside the problem. Of course, in this case we are no longer allowed to say that "I" refers to a mode of consciousness and thus to something real. Once it is admitted that we do refer to some such reality, the entire problem returns. And we have to

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48. *Nl*, p. 467; see also pp. 493, 516.

49. *Nl*, p. 467; see also *WW 1*, p. 467; or Heath and Lachs, p. 41.

admit this. Otherwise, what binds men together through reason cannot be made intelligible in any way.

Kant discussed this problem in some of his incidental remarks about self-consciousness. The "Self" contains a twofold consciousness, that is, consciousness of logical universality and consciousness of empirically determined personal existence. However, Kant ascribed these to two distinct subjects, namely, pure and empirical apperception; these do indeed belong together, but must nonetheless be kept distinct. Kant thereby fails to consider that the empirical Self *qua* Self is already universal, while the pure Self, for just the same reason, is already an individual. The difficulty here is the same in form as the problem addressed in Fichte's original insight. Individuality and universality in the real Self are two factors primordially united with one another, just as much as Subject and Object in the self-knowing Self are.

Hegel adopted this Kantian position. He searched for the logic of the conditions that must be satisfied if we are to gain an idea of the unity of the Self as both universal and in each case individual. Hegel, too, begins with a problem that Kant had left out of consideration; however, this was a different problem from Fichte's. Consequently, two streams emanating from Kant lead into the idealistic theory of self-consciousness. One leads directly to Hegel; the other, to Fichte. Fichte's standpoint is that of knowledge of the Self. His doctrine of the relationship between the individual Self and Selfhood in general never achieved the profundity of his original insight, no matter how far it went beyond Kant's *obiter dicta*.

If we were attempting a complete stock-taking of the problem of self-consciousness, we would have to point out additional obscurities in Fichte's doctrine. In this essay, however, we wanted only to recall to mind Fichte's original insight. Philosophers have forgotten it; worse still, they have never taken notice of it. Needless to say, we cannot rest satisfied with his insight as though it yielded definitive knowledge. However, no one has surpassed it up until now. Furthermore, it shows us what is required of a theory meant to focus the light of philosophical ideas on that consciousness thanks to which we understand ourselves. If someone uses this light merely to ferret out trivial difficulties, he would do better to stick to other paths.

It would not be overly difficult to show that Fichte's most important successors could still have learned from him when they began working on the theory of self-consciousness. Herbart, for example, wanted to verify Fichte's insights with the help of a more objective method than the one used in the Doctrine of Science. However, he never brought self-consciousness into view as a unitary phenomenon, all his instructive insights notwithstanding. Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, despite many fruitful distinctions, succumbs to Fichte's critique of the reflection theory. Heidegger did, indeed, manage to slip past the philosophy of self-consciousness, but only at the price of simply leaving aside the real question with which it is preoccupied.

It also is regrettable that Fichte's insight had no influence within the historical tradition of Idealism. Instead, Hegel's thought became influential. Fichte would have had two objections to raise: Hegel conceives the unity of opposites only dialectically, in terms of what results from their opposition. However, the phenomenon of the Self requires that this unity be interpreted as original and primordial. Furthermore, Hegel treats the unity of actuality and freedom only as the actualization of freedom, not, once again, as the original unity of both. Every unfolding of opposites, according to Fichte, takes place within the scope of their unity, the unity that first makes their movement possible. Freedom, for him, must be conceived of as actual freedom from the first.

Many of Hegel's successors raise objections of this sort, yet their conclusions never reach the level of Fichte's insight. They are all inclined to give some abstract actuality priority over the Self, Reason, and Freedom and to say that we are dependent on this actuality. This simply repeats Hegel's error from the opposite direction, and in a cruder form. They think only about what ties freedom to some fact, not about freedom as fact,<sup>xx</sup> but, in that case, the question of the essence, unity, and origin of the Self must remain unanswered.

## Translation Notes

i *Ich-Subjekt*, in the original. Its counterpart is *Ich-Objekt*.  
ii I.e. in Goethe's *Ur-Faust*.  
iii *durch eine faktische Aktuosität*, in the original.  
iv "in an instant" or "instantaneously." See Plato, *Seventh Letter* 341 c-d; *Parmenides* 156d; and *Symposium* 210e.  
v *Akt der Tätigkeit*, in the original.  
vi *Selbst*, in the original.  
vii *Moment*, in the original. This is a technical term in German philosophical texts, drawn originally from the science of statics (see Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, ed. Lasson, vol. I, 94), as is the corresponding English phrase "the moments of a balance." It does not have any temporal connotation in this use. The translator has chosen "factor" since its Latin root carries some, if not all, of the force of German "Moment."  
viii *Eine Tätigkeit, der ein Auge eingesetzt ist*. Fichte's key term *setzen* and *einsetzen* are linguistically akin. The literal sense of the phrase is thus: "an activity into which an eye is posited."  
ix *Geistlichkeit*, in the original. As always, *Geist* spans the border between spirit and mind or intellect.  
x *eines sich selbst Offenbarends*, in the original. The verbal noun *Offenbaren* could also mean "revelation."  
xi *Selbstbezug*, in the original.  
xii *das 'Als,' das 'Sich' oder das 'Durch,'* in the original.  
xiii *still hineingesehen*, in the original. *Hineinsehen* often suggests reading something into a situation that is not actually there.  
xiv *Augenkraft*, in the original.  
xv *Sicherscheinen*, in the original.  
xvi Karl Leonard Reinhold (1758-1823) was an influential interpreter and exponent of Kant. The work referred to here is *Beyträge zur Berichtung bisherigen Misverständnisse der Elementarphilosophie betreffend*.  
xvii Gottlob Ernst Schulze (1761-1833), an advocate of skepticism in answer to Kant's critical philosophy, in 1792 published anonymously his major work *Aenesidemus*. Fichte's review appeared in 1794 in the *Allgemeine Literaturzeitung* (Jena).  
xviii *Sichhaben*, in the original.  
xix *Anstoss*, in the original.  
xx "Nur das Faktum der Freiheit wird gedacht, nicht die Freiheit als Faktum," in the original.



# KANT'S CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE AND THE CRITERIA OF OBLIGATORY, PROHIBITED, AND OPTIONAL ACTIONS\*

Theodor Ebert

Translated by Cathleen Muehleck Weber

Distinguishing obligatory, prohibited, and optional actions from one another is basic to moral consciousness in general. Thus, it seems fair to demand of a systematic rational theory of morals that it provide criteria that enable us to make this distinction. Optional actions are those which are neither obligatory nor prohibited. Since one and the same action cannot be both obligatory and prohibited, the classification of obligatory, prohibited, and optional actions is exhaustive and mutually exclusive. Every action *must* belong to *one* and to *only* one of these three classes. Thus, a systematic rational philosophy of morals must meet the following requirement in respect to this tripartition: It must enable us to decide for each and every action whether it is obligatory, prohibited, or optional.

In the following, I use the term 'action' to mean the performance of an action as well as refraining from action. This seems to be in accordance with

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\*Translated from Theodor Ebert, "Kants kategorischer Imperativ und die Kriterien gebotener, verbotener und freigestellter Handlungen," in *Kant-Studien*, ed. Gerhard Funke and Joachim Kopper (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1976), vol. 67, no. 4, pp. 570-83. Theodor Ebert, born in 1939, is chief assistant professor at the Institute für Philosophie of the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg. After receiving his Ph.D. in 1967 from the University of Heidelberg for his dissertation on "Meinung und Wissen in der Philosophie Platons" ("Belief and Knowledge in the Philosophy of Plato"), the author spent one year of study as migrant graduate of Brasenose College at Oxford University. In 1977-78, Dr. Ebert was a Leverhulme Visiting Fellow with the Department of Philosophy of University College, London. His special areas of research include ancient philosophy and analytical philosophy, particularly the theory of action. Presently, Dr. Ebert is writing a book on the theory of argumentation.

ordinary language: I can say that because someone did 'not act' (thus refraining from action), he *acted* in the wrong or right way, respectively. In this context, it is also important to note that refraining from action is not identical with mere inaction. Otherwise, in every moment of my lifetime, I would be refraining from innumerable actions. That would, however, have absurd consequences for a theory of moral action, because refraining from action (like every action) is *imputable*. Mere inaction is only a *necessary* condition for refraining from action. When I say that someone refrained from action, I mean: (1) he did not perform a particular action, and (2) he was aware of the possibility of performance prior to not acting.

It seems absurd to say that someone refrained from performing a particular action, when he did not consider it to be a possibility before the time of not acting.

## I

In the following, Kant's critical philosophy of morals will be examined in order to determine whether it fulfills the requirement just set forth. It is well known that Kant considers the categorical imperative to be the "principle of morality."<sup>1</sup> In his opinion, "all imperatives of duty can be derived from this one imperative as their principle."<sup>2</sup> It cannot be doubted that obligatory actions are duties and that they are the *only actions* that are duties (whether all duties are actions need not concern our inquiry). Consequently, according to Kant's own contentions the categorical imperative is definitely also a principle of obligatory actions. Thus, it is a sound undertaking to attempt to obtain criteria from the categorical imperative for distinguishing the three classes of actions.

However, a difficulty is immediately encountered when seeking to obtain criteria for obligatory, prohibited, and optional actions from the categorical imperative. I shall assume that the categorical imperative, "So act that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as a principle of establishing universal law,"<sup>3</sup> can provide a criterion (a necessary and sufficient condition) for a classification of actions. Then this criterion would allow me to divide the class of actions into *two* subclasses but not into *three*.

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1. Immanuel Kant, *Kants Gesammelte Schriften*, Königliche Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften (hereafter cited as *KGS*); Vol. 5: *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, ed. Paul Natorp (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1913), A 56; V, 32; or *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Lewis White Beck (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956), p. 32 (hereafter cited as *KdP V* and *CPrR*, respectively).
2. *KGS*, Vol. 4: *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, ed. Paul Menzer (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1911), A/B 52, IV, 421; or *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Lewis White Beck (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1959), p. 39 (hereafter cited as *Grundlegung* and *Foundations*, respectively).
3. *KdP V*, A 54; V, 30; or *CPrR*, p. 31.

In order to answer my question, however, a trichotomy is necessary. I would be able to distinguish between two classes of actions: those actions which conform to the criterion possibly formulated by the categorical imperative, and those which do not. Again assuming that the categorical imperative does contain a criterion relevant to our inquiry, it is nevertheless already a priori certain that an additional principle is necessary in order to arrive at criteria for the three classes of actions.

Perhaps I should note at this point that Kant is familiar with the classification of actions into obligatory, prohibited, and optional ones. In this regard, section 4 of the introduction to *The Metaphysics of Morals* is relevant to this inquiry. Kant writes: "An action which is neither commanded nor prohibited is merely allowed, because for it there is no law which limits freedom (authorization) and therefore also no duty. Such an action is called morally indifferent (*indifferens*, *adiaphoron*, *res merae facultatis*)."<sup>4</sup> Thus, Kant uses the expression "merely allowed" where I use the term "optional." I will continue to maintain this usage in order to prevent confusion with a more comprehensive concept of the "allowed" in Kant's thought. In the more comprehensive sense, an action "which is not contrary to obligation" is allowed.<sup>5</sup> An "allowed" action is therefore obligatory or optional. In the following, I will reserve the term "allowed" for this meaning.

Admittedly, morally indifferent actions do not appear entirely unproblematical for Kant. After the two sentences just quoted, Kant continues: "It may be asked whether there are any such actions, and if there are, whether in order to be free to do or forbear as one pleases there must be a law of command (lex praceptiva, lex mandati) and the law of prohibition (lex prohibita, lex vetiti)."<sup>6</sup> But in another passage in *The Metaphysics of Morals*—in the "Introduction to the Metaphysical Principles of Virtue"—Kant condemns a position that does not allow for adiaphora, because it is "fantastically virtuous."<sup>7</sup> Thus, I may assume that he would have assented to the *first* of the two questions in the quotation. Only the first question is relevant to my inquiry.

## II

By a criterion for *A* I mean, as before, a necessary and sufficient condition for the occurrence of *A*. If there is such a criterion for *A*, *indirectly*

4. KGS, Vol. 6: *Metaphysik der Sitten*, ed. Paul Natorp (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1907), A/B 21; VI, 223; or *The Metaphysics of Morals: The Metaphysical Principles of Virtue, Part II of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. James Ellington (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), p. 23 (hereafter cited as *MdS* and *MM*, respectively).
5. *MdS*, A/B 21; VI, 222; or *MM*, p. 23.
6. *MdS*, A/B 21-22; VI, 223; or *MM*, p. 23.
7. *MdS*, A 52-53; VI, 409; or *MM*, p. 69.

there is a criterion for non-*A* as well; that is, if and only if the criterion for *A* does not hold true, then non-*A* is the case.

The categorical imperative could contain a criterion relevant to the problem of distinguishing three classes of action in two different ways. First, it could contain a criterion for *one* of the three classes (and thereby *indirectly* a criterion for the remaining two). Or it could contain a criterion for the logical sum of two of the three classes of action (and thereby again *indirectly* a criterion for the remaining third class). Accordingly, in order to arrive at criteria for a tripartition, I would in the first case have to look for a principle that permits me to make the corresponding further subdivision of the *complement* of the class of actions provided with a criterion by the categorical imperative. In the second case, I would have to seek out a principle that would enable me to make this subdivision *within* that class of actions which is specified by the criterion stated in the categorical imperative.

In fact, it is not difficult to see that the formulations of the categorical imperative call attention to a specific class of actions. It refers to those actions which I do or leave undone according to a maxim that can serve as a principle of universal legislation; in short, actions that comply with a universalizable maxim. Do these actions correspond to one class of the three or to a combination of two of the three classes of actions, and if so, to which?

First of all, it is necessary to correct a misunderstanding that may easily result from Kant's formulation of the categorical imperative. According to this misconception, those actions which comply with a universalizable maxim, and to which the categorical imperative refers, are *obligatory actions*, that is, duties. This mistake is facilitated by the circumstance that the categorical imperative is expressed as a command, and, according to Kant in the *Foundations*: "As absolutely, though practically, necessary it can be called a command in the strict sense."<sup>8</sup> However, it is easily seen that the commanding nature of the categorical imperative does not imply that the actions, for which the categorical imperative states a criterion, are obligatory actions. Also the imperative: "If you drive in a foreign country, abide by the traffic regulations that are in effect there!" is a command, although the actions to which it refers (that is, those actions that comply with the traffic regulations of a particular country), are not obligatory: What is commanded is that I choose my actions exclusively from this class of actions. To put it in another way, I am obligated to restrict my actions to those *allowed* by the traffic regulations of the country in question ('allowed' namely, 'not prohibited'). I am commanded not to perform certain actions and that is to say it is prohibited to perform certain actions.

In the categorical imperative there is an analogy. In any case it also commands me to perform *only* those actions, the maxim of which can be universalized. Conversely, that means here again that the categorical imperative

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8. *Grundlegung*, A/B 44; IV, 416; or *Foundations*, p. 34.

prohibits actions, the maxim of which does not qualify as a principle of universal legislation. Thus, a *sufficient* condition for the “prohibitedness” (*Verbotensein*) of an action is in any case that its respective maxim is not universalizable. This also means that the universalizability of a maxim of an action is in any case a *necessary* condition for the permissibility (that is, non-prohibitedness) of the respective action. However, can it be concluded that for this reason the impossibility of universalizing the maxim of an action is a necessary condition for its being prohibited, and, what is equivalent to this, is the universalizability of a maxim a *sufficient* condition for the permissibility of the action performed in accordance with that maxim?

It seems to me that Kant’s claim of identifying the “principle of morality”<sup>9</sup> in the categorical imperative can only be upheld if the universalizability of the maxim is regarded as a necessary as well as a sufficient condition for the *permissibility* (nonprohibitedness) of the respective action and, therefore, if the impossibility of universalizing the respective maxim is considered to be a sufficient *and* necessary condition for the prohibitedness of the action performed in accordance with that maxim. If, namely, the impossibility of universalizing a particular maxim were only a sufficient but not also a necessary condition for the prohibitedness of the respective action, then there would be prohibited actions performed according to a maxim, which could serve as a principle of universal legislation. Thereby, however, the class of actions that comply with a universalizable maxim, would also contain prohibited actions in addition to obligatory and optional ones. Consequently, acting in accord with the law expressed in the categorical imperative would not guarantee that I was not performing prohibited actions, that is, those actions from which it is my duty to refrain.

### III

Although Kant never explicitly stated it, he did indeed consider the universalizability of a maxim to be a criterion (a necessary and sufficient condition) for the permissibility of the action performed in accordance with that maxim—and thereby the impossibility of universalizing a particular maxim to be a criterion of prohibitedness of the respective action. In the *Foundations* he states: “Morality is . . . the relation of actions to the autonomy of the will, i.e., to the possible universal lawgiving by maxims of the will. The action which can be compatible with the autonomy of the will is *permitted*; that which does not agree with it is *prohibited*.<sup>10</sup> Since the autonomy of the will is defined by the criterion of the universalizability of its maxims,<sup>11</sup> I may consider an action to be in accord with the autonomy of the

9. *KdV*, A 56; V, 32; or *CPtR*, p. 32.

10. *Grundlegung*, A/B 85-86; IV, 439; or *Foundations*, p. 58.

11. Compare *Grundlegung*, A/B 88; IV, 440; or *Foundations*, p. 59, where Kant says of the categorical imperative that it “commands neither more nor less than this very autonomy.”

will if and only if the action is performed in accord with a universalizable maxim. The two parts of the second statement just quoted mean therefore: (1) Every action, the maxim of which can be universalized, is an action that is allowed, (2) every action, the maxim of which cannot be universalized, is an action which is not allowed. Since the class of actions that are not allowed is complementary to the class of actions that are allowed, (2) is the contrapositive of the converse of (1): (2) is therefore equivalent to the statement: (2) Every allowed action is an action, the maxim of which is universalizable.

Thus, (1) and (2) together state that the universalizability of a maxim is a criterion of the permissibility of the action performed in accordance with that maxim; and conversely, the impossibility of universalizing a particular maxim is thereby declared to be the criterion of the impermissibility (prohibitedness) of the respective action.

I have therefore answered the question posed earlier as to whether the categorical imperative contains a criterion for one of our three classes of action or for the logical sum of two of the classes, in favor of the second possibility. In the formula regarding the universalizability of the maxims of actions, the categorical imperative establishes a criterion for the logical sum of the obligatory and optional actions, that is, for allowed actions. Indirectly it contains a criterion for prohibited actions.

In addition to the passage quoted from the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, there is a passage in *The Metaphysics of Morals* which indicates that Kant himself regarded, even if only implicitly, the universalizability of the maxim to be a criterion of the permissibility of the action under consideration. Thus by establishing the formula of the maxim, which can serve as a principle of universal legislation, Kant was aware that he had set forth a principle for a possible distinction between allowed actions and those which are not allowed. First, I quote the passage in question from section 4 of the introduction to *The Metaphysics of Morals* without making any omissions. Then I omit certain parts in order to clearly show the crucial point in this context.

Upon this concept of freedom, which is positive (from a practical point of view), are founded unconditional practical laws, which are called *moral*. For us, whose choice is sensibly affected and therefore does not of itself conform with the pure will but often opposes it, these moral laws are *imperatives* (commands or prohibitions), and, moreover, are categorical (unconditional) imperatives. In being unconditional, they are distinguished from technical imperatives (rules of art), which always give only conditional commands. According to categorical imperatives, certain actions are *permitted* or *not permitted*, i.e., are morally possible or impossible; however, some actions or their opposite are, according to these imperatives, morally necessary, i.e., *obligatory*.<sup>12</sup>

Upon this ["positive"] concept of freedom . . . are founded unconditional practical laws . . . For us . . . these moral laws are *imperative*, . . . and, moreover,

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12. *MdS*, A/B 19; VI, 221; or *MM*, p. 21.

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are categorical . . . imperatives. According to categorical imperatives, certain actions are *permitted* or *not permitted*. . . .

When Kant refers to categorical imperatives (in the plural form) in this passage, he obviously does not mean particular requirements of duty related to specific situations, but rather, as he states, "practical laws," that is, requirements that have a specific degree of universality. The commandments of the Decalogue would presumably be one example.

#### IV

We will immediately turn to the question of how it is then possible to arrive at a criterion of obligatory actions on the basis of the categorical imperative (or rather from categorical imperatives, that is, practical laws for sensuous-rational beings). First it should be pointed out, however, that Kant did not always follow the implicit identification of allowed actions with those actions complying with the principle of the universalizability of their maxims. In section 3 of the *Foundations*, for example, Kant argues: The reason for the possibility of a categorical imperative is that man belongs to the world of sense as well as to the world of intellect. "As a mere member of the intelligible world, all my actions would completely accord with the principle of the autonomy of the pure will."<sup>13</sup> But, on the other hand, I am "a being which belongs to the world of sense,"<sup>14</sup> and must at the same time regard the laws of the intelligible world as directly legislative for my will. Consequently, "I recognize myself," Kant contends, "qua intelligence as subject to the law of the world of understanding and to the autonomy of the will. . . . Therefore I must regard the laws of the intelligible world as imperatives for me, and actions in accord with this principle as duties."<sup>15</sup> The principle of the autonomy of the will is none other than the possible universal legislation by its maxims.<sup>16</sup> Actions in accord with this principle cannot, however, be thought of as duties, or as obligatory actions, as Kant freely contends in the passage just quoted. Only the contrary holds, that is, all my actions that agree with duty are in accord with the principle of autonomy. If Kant's assertion in the passage just quoted were the case, I would have to regard morally indifferent actions—that is, deeds, that I can do or leave undone according to a universalizable maxim—as morally obligatory actions. Then it would be my duty to act and to refrain from action at the same time, which is obviously absurd.

But precisely because I cannot treat the universalizability of the maxim as a sufficient condition for considering the respective action to be obligatory,

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13. *Grundlegung*, A/B 110; IV, 453; or *Foundations*, p. 72.

14. *Grundlegung*, A/B 111; IV, 453-454; or *Foundations*, p. 73.

15. *Grundlegung*, A/B 111; IV, 453-454; or *Foundations*, pp. 72-73.

16. *Grundlegung*, A/B 85-86; IV, 439; or *Foundations*, p. 58.

as Kant imprudently contends in the passage quoted from the *Foundation*, I must answer the following question: What is the criterion of obligatory actions and how can they be derived from the categorical imperative?

The universalizability of the maxim is a criterion of the permissibility of the action performed in accordance with it. Consequently, a principle is needed, that allows me to distinguish between obligatory actions and optional ones within the class of allowed actions. A law of deontic logic allows this distinction to be made. It is, so to speak, the counterpart of a law of modal logic. By virtue of the traditional definition of necessity as that the opposite of which is not possible, I shall state the following equivalence in modal logic:

$$\text{Not-possible } p \leftrightarrow \text{necessarily not-}p$$

In accordance with Kant we may now define allowed or unallowed actions as *morally possible* or *impossible* ones, and *commanded (obligatory)* actions as those which are morally necessary.<sup>17</sup> Further, it is seen that the relationship between two contradictory statements is analogous to the relationship between performing an action and refraining from the same action (by the same person at the same time). The objection that I am really dealing with contraries and not with contradictories in the latter case—because in addition to performing an action and refraining from an action there is still the third possibility of inaction *without* an awareness of the possibility of performance—does not pertain, because in order that a form of inaction be imputable, the agent must be aware of the possibility of performing the respective action. Since imputability is a necessary condition for action, such cases of *mere* inaction can be excluded from the class of actions. Thus, the class of actions contains only performing an action and refraining from an action; and in reference to one and the same deed, the two types constitute a contradiction in the class of actions.

If I define performing an action and refraining from an action as 'practical opposites,' then I may state the following. An action is obligatory if and only if its practical opposite is prohibited:

$$\text{Prohibited } A \leftrightarrow \text{obligatory non-}A$$

Here *A* and *non-A* represent an action and its practical opposite. In deontic logic this proposition is the counterpart of the previously mentioned equivalent from modal logic.

Correspondingly, the following is valid:

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17. Compare the passage referred to in no. 12, *MdS*, A/B 19, VI, 221; or *MM*, p. 21; also the Table of Categories of Freedom, *KdP V*, A 117; V, 66; or *CPrR*, pp. 68-69.

**Prohibited non-*A* ↔ obligatory *A***

I may derive this equivalence from the first one under two conditions: (1) if I allow refraining from action be an argument for *A*, and (2) if I assume a rule analogous to that of double negation, according to which refraining from refraining from action is equivalent to its performance.

Thus, obligatory and prohibited actions may be characterized as follows: It is never the case that they and their respective practical opposite belong *at the same time* to the class of allowed or unallowed actions, respectively. Conversely, I may define optional actions in the following manner: They belong together with their respective practical opposite to one of the two classes of actions, namely to the class of allowed actions.

Consequently, in the equivalence just formulated I find the additional principle needed to distinguish obligatory from optional actions within the class of allowed actions. I can now formulate the criteria of the three classes of obligatory, prohibited, and optional actions as follows:

An action is prohibited if and only if its maxim is not universalizable.

An action is obligatory if and only if its practical opposite is prohibited.

An action is optional if and only if neither it nor its practical opposite is prohibited.

It is easily seen that the concept of the prohibited action is fundamental to the definitions of obligatory and optional actions but not vice versa. This concept is, however, defined indirectly by the criterion formulated in the categorical imperative, that is, of the maxim of an action. Consequently, the categorical imperative is indeed fundamental for the definitions just stated. Although the criterion established by the categorical imperative is in itself sufficient for distinguishing prohibited actions from allowed ones, a deduction of obligatory actions is only possible by using the second principle, namely, the equivalence that was just formulated. To be sure, this principle is not a separate *principle of morality* alongside the categorical imperative. It presupposes the concept of the prohibited action beforehand, and additionally employs only the concept of the practical opposite of an action. The latter concept has its place in a universal theory of action but not in ethics, although ethics necessarily makes use of it. Thus, although the deduction of those actions which are duties is only possible by using two principles, Kant nevertheless is not incorrect in speaking of the categorical imperative as *the principle of morality*.

**V**

Was it clear to Kant that the deduction of duties from the categorical imperative requires the second principle, namely, the principle that enables

me to infer the obligatory nature of an action from the prohibited nature of its practical opposite, and vice versa?

First of all, Kant takes the first half of the equivalence to be self-evident; he assumes that if an action is prohibited, then its practical opposite is obligatory. Examples Kant gives to show that certain actions are obligatory (duties) can be cited as evidence of his assumption.

He argues in the *Foundations*: If an action is not permissible, because its maxim does *not* comply with universal legislation, then its practical opposite is obligatory. It is a duty not to commit suicide: to do so is not permissible because, according to Kant, its maxim could not be a universal law of nature.<sup>18</sup> Analogously, it is a duty to refrain from borrowing money, if I know I will not be able to repay it. Here, too, the reason is that in doing so, I would act according to a maxim that would not qualify as a universal law. Thus, the performance of this action is not permitted.

I must, however, differentiate between mere *employment* of a particular law of logic as an implicit assumption and explicit knowledge of that law. It would be a hasty conclusion to infer explicit knowledge from mere usage. Also, someone who lacks training in logic usually abides by the laws of logic in his arguments, although in many instances he is unable to formulate these laws explicitly.

In this case, however, I can assume that Kant was explicitly aware of the function of the principle just stated. Because of its analogy to the traditional definition of necessity, it seems likely that he would have been acquainted with it from the academic philosophy of his time. In addition, Kant's remarks in section 4 of the introduction of *The Metaphysics of Morals*, to which I have repeatedly referred, show with a high degree of certainty an explicit knowledge of this principle and its function regarding the deduction of duties. In that section, entitled "Basic Concepts of the Metaphysics of Morals (*Philosophia practica universalis*)," Kant treats among others also the concept of a conflict of duties and gives the following reason for the impossibility of such a conflict:

A conflict of duties (*collisio officiorum s. obligationum*) would be that relationship between them in which one would (wholly or partially) cancel the other. But since duty and obligation in general are concepts which express the objective practical necessity of certain actions, and since two opposite rules cannot be necessary at the same time, then if it is a duty to act in accordance with one of them, it is not only not a duty, but contrary to duty, to act in accordance with the other. It therefore follows that a conflict of duties and obligations is inconceivable (*obligationes non colliduntur*).<sup>19</sup>

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18. *Grundlegung*, A/B 53-54; IV, 421-422; or *Foundations*, pp. 39-40.

19. *MdS*, A/B 23-24; VI, 224; or *MM*, p. 24.

Here Kant explicitly asserts the other half of the equivalence, namely, the inference of the prohibitedness of an action from the obligatory nature of its practical opposite. Therefore I can assume that he clearly understood the equivalence. Indeed, also for the deduction of duties in the *Foundations* Kant must assume not only a relationship of implication but also one of equivalence between the prohibitedness of an action and the obligatory nature of its practical opposite. Otherwise he could not have deduced all of the obligatory actions in the manner demonstrated. Thus, I can conclude that Kant had explicit knowledge of the logical principle required for the deduction of morally obligatory actions from the categorical imperative.

## VI

Finally, it may be useful to compare these results with interpretations that have appeared in the more recent Kant literature concerned with the questions examined here. Obviously I cannot give a complete summary, nor is it my intention to do so.

It will serve my purpose to consider H. J. Paton first. In his book on the categorical imperative, Paton briefly discusses the question of whether the categorical imperative contains a criterion of obligatory or permissible actions. The respective paragraph is entitled "The permissible and the obligatory."<sup>20</sup> Paton is opposed to an interpretation that assumes "that where we can will a maxim to be a universal law, we ought to act on that maxim."<sup>21</sup> Instead, Paton wants to show that the categorical imperative is only a law of prohibition: "It is quite clear that on Kant's view to act on maxims which will not meet the requirements of universality is to act wrongly. It is also clear that it is permissible (and in that sense 'right') to act on maxims which meet this requirement."<sup>22</sup> Thus Paton treats the universalizability of a maxim as a necessary and sufficient condition for the permissibility of the respective action. I can proceed from the assertion in the first sentence:

Everyone who acts on a maxim that does not meet the requirement of universality acts wrongly.

In addition (according to the rule for contrapositives) I can affirm:

Everyone who acts rightly acts on maxims that meet the requirement of universality.

The conversion of this statement is formulated in the second sentence, namely:

20. Herbert J. Paton, *The Categorical Imperative: A Study in Kant's Moral Philosophy* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1947), p. 141.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

Everyone who acts on maxims that meet the requirement of universality acts rightly.

Since Paton himself identifies 'right' with 'permissible,' the statements together define the universality of the maxim as a criterion of the permissibility of the respective action.

Unfortunately, Paton does not provide textual evidence in support of his correct interpretation of a criterion contained in the categorical imperative. In the subsequent paragraph, he prefers to argue that by virtue of the "rather negative flavour,"<sup>23</sup> which is expressed by the term 'only' in formula, "Act *only* on that maxim. . .", the universality of the maxim signifies a "negative condition" of our actions. He comes to the conclusion that "the categorical imperative, so far, prohibits certain actions."<sup>24</sup> In order to confirm his interpretation, Paton refers to the passage (quoted previously) from the introduction to *The Metaphysics of Morals*.<sup>25</sup> Nowhere does he refer to the passage in the *Foundations* where Kant treats the conformity of an action with the autonomy of the will as a necessary and sufficient condition of its permissibility.<sup>26</sup> Nor does he consider the passage in the *Foundations*, where Kant carelessly, as it seems to me, makes actions that are in accord with the autonomy of the will into duties.<sup>27</sup>

C. D. Broad's *Five Types of Ethical Theory* is usually mentioned by Kant scholars as a prime example of the misconception that Kant considered the universalizability of a particular maxim to be a sufficient condition for the obligatory nature of that maxim, that is, of its respective actions.<sup>28</sup> Broad reproaches Kant for proceeding illegitimately from the statement: "A rational being would *reject* any principle whose acceptance would involve him in logical inconsistency," to "A rational being would *accept* any principle whose acceptance would not involve him in logical inconsistency."<sup>29</sup> Of

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23. Ibid.

24. Ibid., p. 142.

25. *MdS*, A/B 19; VI, 221; or *MM*, p. 21. See Paton, *Categorical Imperative*, p. 142.

26. *Grundlegung*, A/B 85-86; IV, 439; or *Foundations*, p. 58. Cf. above p. 8.

27. *Grundlegung*, A/B 110-111; IV, 453; or *Foundations*, p. 72. Cf. above p. 11.

28. For example, Lewis W. Beck, *A Commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 121; Gertrud Scholz, "Das Problem des Rechts in Kants Moralphilosophie" (Ph.D. diss. University of Cologne, 1972), p. 153; Norbert Hoerster, "Kants kategorischer Imperativ als Test unserer sittlichen Pflichten," in *Die Rehabilitierung der praktischen Philosophie II*, ed. Manfred Riedel (Freiburg: Rombach, 1974), p. 456.

29. C. D. Broad, *Five Types of Ethical Theory* (London: 1930), p. 128. A. Duncan-Jones in "Kant and Universalization," *Analysis* 16 (1955/56): 12-14, tried to give a logically accurate presentation of the mistake Kant allegedly made. He accepts without further examination Broad's absurd assumption that Kant supposedly stated: "If A is universalizable, A is a duty."

course, Broad is speaking here of principles, or, in Kantian terminology, of maxims rather than actions. In both cases, however, the allegation leads to absurd consequences. Only if Kant would not allow for *adiaphora moralia*, would it be plausible to attribute the second sentence to him. But even if that were the case, it would not be legitimate to accuse Kant of inferring this sentence from the first one.

Like Broad, Manfred Moritz and William K. Frankena also treat the universalizability of a maxim as a sufficient (and beyond that a necessary) condition for the obligatory nature of the respective action. Thus Moritz writes: "If performing a particular action is universalizable, then not performing this action (refraining from action) is not universalizable."<sup>30</sup> Moritz himself states that "this opinion implies that there are no 'permissible' actions."<sup>31</sup> Although Moritz sees that Kant assumes that there are permitted actions, he does not consider this to be a reason for a revision of his interpretation. He is of the opinion that Kant's "position on the question, whether there are actions that are permitted or not, is unsettled."<sup>32</sup> William K. Frankena's similar misinterpretation can be concluded from a question that he puts to himself: "Is every maxim that does pass Kant's test a duty, as he seems to think?"<sup>33</sup> Even so, Frankena answers this question in the negative.

For J. Harrison the criterion of the universalizability of a maxim stated in the categorical imperative proves to be only a *sufficient* but not a necessary condition for the permissibility of the respective action: "If my maxim is right, it will follow that every action performed upon it is right, but if my maxim is wrong, it will not follow that every action performed upon it is wrong"<sup>34</sup>—and according to Harrison, Kant maintained also the last part of the statement. That is correct, but Kant never tried to *deduce* it from the first statement. Correspondingly, Harrison accuses Kant of making an error "analogous to that of denying the antecedent in the *modus ponendo ponens*."<sup>35</sup>

30. Manfred Moritz, *Studien zum Pflichtbegriff in Kant's Ethik* (Lund: Gleerup, 1951), p. 22.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.; Moritz, "Pflicht und Moralität: Eine Antinomie in Kants kritischer Ethik." *Kant-Studien* 56 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1966), pp. 417-418.

33. William K. Frankena, *Ethics*, ed. Elizabeth and Monroe Beardsley (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 27.

34. Jonathan Harrison, "Kant's Examples of the First Formulation of the Categorical Imperative," in *Kant: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Robert Paul Wolff (London: Macmillan, 1968), p. 242.

35. Ibid. <At this point in the German version of this article, I mistakenly added that Hoerster had advanced the thesis that for Kant, the universalizability of a particular maxim is only a necessary condition of permissibility. This incorrect interpretation appeared solely in the photocopied copy proofs that Hoerster distributed during an evening lecture and discussion of his article at the

While Broad, Moritz, and Frankena want to make the universalizability of the maxim into a criterion of duty, Harrison makes it a merely *sufficient* condition of *permissibility*. The fact that the formula of universalizability is open to a variety of misinterpretations renders the reproach of Kant not without some basis, that when he discovered the "principle of morality" in the categorical imperative, he neglected to show in the clearest manner possible, *how* "all imperatives of duty can be derived from this one imperative as their principle."

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University of Erlangen-Nuremberg. The mistake was corrected in the published version.> Norbert Hoerster, "Kants kategorischer Imperativ als Test unserer sittlichen Pflichten," in *Die Rehabilitierung der praktischen Philosophie II*, ed. Manfred Riedel (Freiburg: Rombach, 1974).

# THE GOLDEN RULE: NEW ASPECTS OF AN OLD MORAL PRINCIPLE\*

Hans-Ulrich Hoche

Translated by J. Claude Evans

## I The Golden Rule in the Past and the Present

The Golden Rule is the name of a moral principle whose traditional formulations generally amount to the demand that one treat every person as one would oneself wish to be treated in his place.<sup>1</sup> This moral principle can be found in almost all cultures and religions,<sup>2</sup> and has played a significant role in western philosophy from the very beginning—Diogenes Laërtius (I, p. 36) ascribes to Thales a version of the Golden Rule that will turn out to be especially important at the end of this essay—and at least up to Kant's contemporaries. The principle received the greatest attention in the context

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\*Translated from "Die Goldene Regel. Neue Aspekte eines alten Moralprinzips," *Zeitschrift für Philosophische Forschung* (Meisenheim: Anton Hain, 1978), vol. 32, No. 3, pp. 355-75.

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1. The name 'Golden Rule' can only be traced back to the end of the eighteenth century: Philippidis, 1929, p. 14f., Dihle, 1962, p. 8 fn. 1; Reinder, 1977, p. 231 and fn. 1 (which corrects Reiner 1964a, p. 187, fn. 2). See bibliography.
2. Compare Spooner, 1913; Philippidis, 1929; Hertzler, 1934, pp. 419-26; Hein and Jeremias, 1958; Dihle, 1962; and Spendl, 1967, p. 496.

of the natural law theories and the ethics of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment. In patristic and scholastic philosophy, Augustine, Bonaventura, Albertus Magnus, and Thomas Aquinas are especially important; in modern philosophy and legal theory, above all Hobbes, Pufendorf, and Thomasius, but also Locke and Leibniz, Voltaire, the encyclopedist Duclos, Rousseau, and Herder.<sup>3</sup>

But at almost the same time that Herder (1784, p. 160) was celebrating the Golden Rule as the "rule of justice and truth," as "the great law of equity and equilibrium," Kant, in his *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785, p. 68 fn.; trans. p. 55 fn.), believed that he could refute all of the ethical claims of the, in his opinion "banal," Golden Rule by using three arguments in a single sentence. This verdict, and Kant's own theory of the categorical imperative as the highest principle of all morality, seem to be responsible for the fact that the Golden Rule has received almost no attention in German philosophy since Kant. As far as I can see, Hans Reiner is the only exception. Among his numerous writings which are concerned with or touch on this theme the valuable essays from 1948 and 1977 deserve special mention. Aside from this, the Golden Rule has been of interest only within comparative religion, theology, the philosophy of law, and classical philology. This disdain on the part of German philosophy is also evident in the fact that even such an ambitious project as the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* does not contain an article on the *Goldene Regel*. (I understand, however, that an article on the Golden Rule will be included in one of the forthcoming volumes.)

In contrast, interest in the Golden Rule has never entirely disappeared in the English-speaking philosophical community, and since the beginning of the 1960s it has received such a strong impetus there that one might well speak of a philosophical rehabilitation of this ancient moral principle. Leading figures in this development are the American moral philosopher M. G. Singer (1961, 1963, 1967) and the English moral philosopher R. M. Hare (1968, 1975), whose publications have also revitalized the German philosophical discussion of the Golden Rule for some years now. Examples are Hoerster (1971, 1974a), Schüller (1973), and Craemer-Ruegenberg (1975).<sup>3a</sup>

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3. With regard to Augustine, Bonaventura, and Aquinas (as well as other Medieval sources), see Reiner 1948, pp. 76f, and Roy, 1970, pp. 36–39. Additional references are in the bibliography.

3a. Beier (1977) was written after completion of this chapter. In addition to an original approach, this investigation contains above all penetrating analyses and critiques of the positions represented by Reiner, Singer, and an earlier version of the present paper. Unfortunately, this work was completed too late for me to take account of more than a few of its suggestion. (Added in proof.)

## II Traditional Formulations and Interpretations of the Golden Rule

Wherever the Golden Rule is found, it is handed down in positive and negative versions. The negative versions seem to predominate, which most certainly is not an accident, but rather, as we shall see, probably has methodological reasons.<sup>4</sup> In German culture there is a positive and a negative version. The German folk proverb, obviously following the apocryphal biblical book Tobit (4:15), is negative: "Was du nicht willst, daß man dir tu', das füg' auch keinem andern zu" ("What you don't want others to do to you, that to others you should not do"). The two versions in the New Testament, Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:31, are positive. The first is one of the highlights of the Sermon on the Mount, and the truest translation of the original would perhaps read: "Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." The Babylonian Talmud (Sabbath, 31a) ascribes a very similar, although negative, version of the Golden Rule to an elder contemporary of Jesus, the Rabbi Hillel: "Whatsoever thou wouldest that men should not do to thee, do not do that to them. This is the whole Law; the rest is mere commentary." And once again very similar, in the ancient Indian national epic Mahābhārata (XIII, 5571ff.): "Let no man do to another that which would be repugnant to himself; this is the sum of righteousness; the rest is according to inclination. In refusing, in bestowing, in regard to pleasure and pain, to what is agreeable and disagreeable a man obtains the proper rule by regarding the case as like his own" <(quoted by Hertzler, 1934, p. 420)>. Here the last sentence recalls Leibniz' interpretation (1765, Book I, chap. 2, section 4) that the "true meaning" of the Golden Rule is "that the right point of view for judging equitably is to put oneself in the position of the other." Hobbes too repeatedly characterized this moral principle as the demand "that a man imagine himself in the place of the party with whom he has to do, and reciprocally him in his."<sup>5</sup> What this might mean in detail has probably

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4. The distinction between the negative and positive versions seems not to be essential to the more usual formulations of the Golden Rule, to which I shall restrict my attention for the moment. This has been emphasized recently by Singer, 1963, pp. 294, 304, 306, and Hoerster, 1971, p. 68. Spendel (1967), on the other hand, defends the thesis that the positive version is not universally valid and cannot be viewed as a 'further development' of the negative version of the principle, whereas the latter turns out to be binding (p. 506). But his defense of this thesis is rendered worthless by serious errors, especially the false position of the negator (p. 507; see also p. 512). However, a negative version will indeed turn out to be indispensable for the universalized and unrestrictedly applicable form of the Golden Rule (see sections IX-X).
5. Hobbes, 1640, part I, chap. 17, § 9; also 1642, chap. 3, §26: "regula, ut cum dubitet, id quod facturus in alterum sit, iure facturus sit naturali necne, putet se esse in illius alterius loco."

received its most comprehensive treatment from Confucius (compare Philipidis, 1929, pp. 64-67), and was epitomized most concisely by the stoic Seneca (letter to Lucilius, 47, 11): "Haec tamen praecepti mei summa est: sic cum inferiore vivas, quemadmodum tecum superiorem velis vivere." ("This is the sum of my teaching: Live with those of lesser rank as you would wish that one of higher rank would live with you.")

It seems to me that three points stand out clearly in this survey of various formulations and interpretations of the Golden Rule:

1. The Golden Rule refers explicitly or implicitly to a particular relation  $R$  between the one who is called on to act and the one who will be (primarily) affected by the action.

2. In a given situation in which I must make decisions and act, the Golden Rule calls on me to put myself fictively, in a kind of thought experiment, in the place of the person to whom I stand in relation  $R$ , who is thus the one who will be (primarily) affected by my action.

3. But the Golden Rule does *not* require me to completely exchange places in this fiction with the one who is (primarily) affected by my action, that is, to imagine that it is not I who stand in relation  $R$  to him, but rather he who stands in this relation to me. Rather, it is sufficient that in the thought experiment someone stand to me in that relation  $R$  in which I stand, in the given situation, to the one who is (primarily) affected by my action.<sup>6</sup>

For these reasons, I would suggest the following standard formulation for the Golden Rule as it is understood by the preponderant tradition: "Treat everyone in the way that you would wish to be treated in their position."

### III Critique of Some Contemporary Interpretations of the Golden Rule

The question of what this demand precisely implies has often been discussed, and has received a variety of answers. For Singer (1963, p. 300), only the following "general interpretation" comes into question, an interpretation that seems unacceptable to me:

Here what I have to consider is the general ways in which I would have others behave in their treatment of me. And what I would have them do, in abstraction from any of my particular desires, and all that I am entitled to expect them to do, is to take account of my interests, desires, needs, and wishes—which may well be different from theirs—and either satisfy them or else not wilfully frustrate them. If I would have others take account of my interests and wishes in their treatment of me, even though my interests and wishes may differ considerably from their own, then what the Golden Rule in this interpretation requires of me is that I should take account of the interests and wishes of others in my treatment of them.

6. For this reason, I take the addition "and reciprocally him in his" in Hobbes' formula above quoted to be unjustified.

I am to treat others as I would have them treat me, that is, on the same principle or standard as I would have them apply in their treatment of me. And the same principle or standard in application to differing circumstances or interests can lead to widely divergent particular results.

This interpretation of the Golden Rule, reasonable as it may appear at first glance, is in my opinion subject to no less than four objections.

1. It is exclusively oriented toward the more familiar traditional formulations, which do not expressly refer to the given practical situation.

2. Thus, Singer is forced to interpret the Golden Rule without referring to concrete practical situations, and, consequently, on such a high level of generality that it is impossible to suppress the question of why the principle is not given a correspondingly general formulation from the very beginning, for example: "Treat everyone in terms of an appropriate consideration of his needs, interests and wishes." But the question of why the great religious leaders and lawgivers avoided any such version is easy to answer. A moral principle formulated in this manner says less than the Golden Rule in that it does not offer a method for helping one ascertain in concrete situations, the needs, interests, and wishes of the person he is going to put in the position of being (primarily) affected by his action.

3. The actual wishes of a person can always vary as to what are considered his long-term or well-considered interest and his genuine needs. As Aristotle puts it (*Met. XII*, 1072a 25ff.; *Movement of Animals*, 700b 28–30): that which *appears* to someone to be good—the *Φαινόμενον ἀγαθόν* or *Φαινόμενον καλόν*—need not always be identical with that which is *really* good for him—with the *ἀγαθόν* or *όν καγόν*. Thus, the principle that everyone be treated in terms of an appropriate consideration of his needs, interests, and wishes—if it is not considerably refined—can in **concrete** applications time and again lead to incompatible recommendations.

4. Singer's interpretation of the Golden Rule can easily tempt one to pre-judge a more exact investigation of the relation of this moral principle to Singer's "generalization principle" and to understand the two principles to be closely related or even identical, without taking a closer look. Singer (1961, chap. 2, Introduction; 1963, pp. 302, 309) succumbs to this temptation, and the situation is similar in Hoerster and Schüller, who speak of the "principle of equality" or "principle of impartiality" rather than the "generalization principle." But these principles, at least at first glance, are so clearly different from one another that the thesis that they are closely related or even identical could only be the result of a very careful analysis. Even if one follows Hoerster and Schüller in formulating the Golden Rule not as an imperative but rather as an "ought" sentence (as I too would plead), it is still clearly enough distinguished from the principle of generalization, impartiality, or equality, for in this case it would read: "You ought (have an obligation) to treat everyone as you yourself want to be treated by anyone else in a corresponding situation." In contrast, the princi-

ple of equality in the special application to the grammatical second person would read: "You ought to treat everyone as any other person ought to treat you in a corresponding situation." Singer has hidden the gap between these two formulations—which Hare (1963, p. 34 and in general §§3.1-3.2) has strongly emphasized—by slipping from the expression "what I would have them do" to the expression "all that I am entitled to expect them to do" without any mediation (refer back to the long quotation cited previously). This seems simply to amount to replacing the question of how I *want* others to treat me with the question of how others *ought* to treat me. In Hoerster (1971, pp. 69, 71; 1974a, pp. 192-94) and Schüller (1973, p. 57) this very gap is not hidden, but rather bridged over by means of something like the expression "as I *believe* others to have an obligation to treat me." But both authors fail to pose the question of whether or not this expression can really serve as a bridge between the expressions "as I wish to be treated by others" and "as others ought to treat me." That it is in fact to serve this bridging function seems clear to me, since for Hoerster the correctly understood Golden Rule is a mere "special (or subordinate) case" of his "principle of equality," and for Schüller it is even identical with his "principle of impartiality."<sup>7</sup> (That the Golden Rule actually differs profoundly from the equality principle seems to me to be one of the results of my unpublished investigations 1976a, §3.4, §3.10)

#### IV One's Own Wishes and Those of the Other— Wishes and Interests

In view of these considerations, there seems reason enough to be skeptical about Singer's interpretation of the Golden Rule and to ask whether the only alternative to what Singer calls the "general interpretation" of the Golden Rule really is what he calls the "particular interpretation," according to which, for example, the masochist, who enjoys being tortured and humiliated by others, would be morally obligated to become a sadist, and the retired British colonial officer, who yearns to hear the sound of drums in

7. Hoerster, 1971, p. 71; Schüller, 1973, p. 60, see also p. 58. Spendel (1967, p. 511) fails to clearly distinguish the Golden Rule from the Principle of Equality in a somewhat different manner: "In that a person *does not want* to suffer something at the hands of another, he demands that the *other should* (*soll*) refrain from such actions. But in this case he must subjugate *himself* to this demand, because he would otherwise lose his credibility and, in his own case, suspend the norm which he laid down for his neighbors and thus fail to recognize it as universally valid." Depending on whether the 'should' in the first of these two sentences is to be understood in a universalizable sense or not, either the first or the second of the sentences is unfounded and false. See the distinction between four kinds of 'soll' (is to, or should), 'sollte' (ought), 'ist verpflichtet' (ought, or has an obligation) in Hoche, 1967a, §2.3-5, §2.13, §2.15, §3.2.

the jungle night, would have to beat the great tomtom for his neighbor's nocturnal entertainment.<sup>8</sup>

But these examples immediately make it clear that in addition to the "general" and in this sense, the "particular" interpretations of the Golden Rule, there is another; namely, the instance in which one imputes to one's fellow men not *one's own*, but rather *their own* wishes, interests, and needs. This interpretation seems to come closest to the sense of the traditional versions of the Golden Rule: To be sure, I am expected to put myself (in a thought experiment) in the position of the person who is affected by my action, but in this fictitious situation I must not smuggle my own properties, to the extent that they are relevant to the proposed action, out of the real world and into the possible world of the thought experiment; I must rather very carefully try to ascertain and respect the relevant properties of the person in whose position I have placed myself. Thus, the question *cannot* read, "How would I, with all of *my* properties, want to be treated in his position?" but rather, "How would I, with all of *his* properties, want to be treated in his position?"<sup>9</sup>

Can this mean that each of us, whether a masochist or not, has a moral obligation to be a sadist to the masochist? Further, can this mean that it is a mother's duty to continually buy as much ice cream and chocolate as her children want? Can it mean that a teacher who lets a student fail an examination without getting his consent (and who on earth would give it?) violates one of the most basic principles of morality? If that were so, then one would obviously have to reject this interpretation of the Golden Rule too, since it would as little correspond to our intuitive understanding of what a basic moral principle is to be as does the "particular" interpretation that Singer rejects. As a matter of fact, however, this interpretation of the Golden Rule can be defended and justified by paying careful attention to the distinction between *wishes* and *interests*, the very distinction, one remembers, with respect to which Singer's "general" interpretation of the Golden Rule fails.

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8. Singer, 1963, pp. 297-300; see also Singer, 1961, chap. 2, Introduction; Hoerster, 1971, pp. 69, 71; Kelsen 1960<sup>2</sup>, pp. 367f.; Hare, 1963, §7.1.

9. For this reason, I hold the reference to the "normal" case, that men agree about that which they do *not* want to suffer," in Spendel, 1967, p. 511 (see pp. 510, 515) for superfluous, indeed misleading. On the other hand, Singer, 1963, pp. 295-300 remarks correctly that the validity of the Golden Rule does not presuppose a uniformity of human nature. For this reason, the Golden Rule could not only serve as the foundation for an 'interstellar' moral code (which one day might prove necessary), but also govern the relations between fox and crane (or stork) in the famous fable by Aesop (or Lafontaine): The fox, as a good host, would have to put himself in the position of a guest who has a long beak.

## V Versus the "Bochum Bartender's Model" of the Golden Rule

I would like to develop this idea in somewhat more detail, taking the example of a drunken guest whose host would like to stop him from driving home as my point of departure. That the attempt to take the car keys away from him is normally in the best *interest* of the driver—and some of his fellow men—is, if we consider the situation soberly, hard to deny. But anyone who has experienced such a situation from the one or other perspective will be able to testify that a drunken car owner normally does not at all *wish* to be driven home in a taxi and have to pick up his own car the next morning. If I want to determine how I myself as a host am to act when one of my motorized guests has over-imbibed, then according to the Golden Rule I must ask myself how I would wish to be treated in such a situation. But this question is obviously not yet clear-cut; it can be developed in two very different ways. In the first possible version the question could read:

"If I should try to get behind the wheel while in less than full possession of my faculties, how would I, at that moment, want to be treated? In such a situation would I really want someone to take the keys away from me, call a taxi, and in this manner force me to pick up my car somewhere the next morning?" "Most certainly not!" is the only possible answer, and I do not say that merely on the basis of hard experience, for it is simply impossible to think consistently that in such a situation I would want both to drive myself home and to be stopped from doing so. If this were the correct question—and if one assumes for the sake of simplicity that only the motorized tippler himself and none of the other motorists and pedestrians in the street is affected by my action—then the Golden Rule would force me to infer from the logically necessary answer just given that in spite of the current *legal* situation in Germany,<sup>1</sup> *morally* I would not even be permitted to hinder a would-be driver, no matter how drunk he might be. This result corresponds precisely to an attitude that—as the *Westdeutsche Allgemeine* newspaper, in cooperation with a young Bochum actor, was able empirically to ascertain—is very popular among (at least!) Bochum's bartenders.<sup>10</sup> But even in the face of such a concentration of experts who deal regularly with motorized tipplers, one should consider whether the second possible version of the decisive question might not lead to a more convincing result. So let us ask the following question:

"If I myself should try to get behind the wheel while in less than full possession of my faculties: how do I, now, while posing the question soberly and with a clear mind, want others to treat me in such a hypothetical situation?" This question can be answered without hesitation: "I can only hope that someone would have the courage to forcefully remove me from my car, if necessary, no matter how nasty I might be about it!" (Here we are obviously

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10. *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*. June 19, 1976, "Bunte Blätter" p. 1.

assuming that in the hypothetical situation one's ability to drive is more than minimally affected, and that there is no higher moral good (*Rechtsgut*) to be observed than the avoidance of even the slightest danger to the normal flow of traffic, as, for instance, in the case of the rescue of a person who must be brought to a hospital without delay.)

Logically, the problem is one of putting the expression "I want" ("will") in the appropriate place within the explicitly formulated answer to the question of how one wants to be treated in the hypothetical situation of the motorized tippler. There are two *prima facie* possibilities for placing this expression, which I would like to call a "buletic operator" (from Greek "*βούλομαι*", that is, "I want, will, wish, desire, intend"; for details see Hoche, 1975, fn. 3). Thus we can contrast the following semiformalized models, which are nothing other than the answers we can expect to hear for both versions of the question:

1. For every time  $t$ : If I am drunk at  $t$  and want to drive without having a compelling reason to do so, then I want, at  $t$ , that no one stop me;

2. I will that at every time  $t$ : If I am drunk at  $t$  and want to drive without having a compelling reason to do so, then someone stop me.

In the *second* model, which is the only one that is appropriate to the sense of the Golden Rule, the buletic operator "I will" stands at the very beginning and is thus not affected by the quantification over moments of time  $t$ . In the *first* model, on the other hand, which I would like to call the "Bochum Bartender's Model" for short, the expression "I want" stands within the scope of the universal quantifier "for every time  $t$ ," namely within the "then" clause.

## VI Metacritique of Kant's Critique of the Golden Rule

Now I suspect that even Kant interpreted the Golden Rule in the sense of the Bochum Bartender's Model and *for this reason* (among others, to be sure) banned it from ethics. In the footnote to the *Foundations* which I mentioned at the beginning, he claims, among other things, that with the help of the Golden Rule even a criminal could "argue against the judge who sentences him."<sup>11</sup> In contrast to this, Hare (1963, §6.9, §7.2, §7.4) has clearly demonstrated that any such argument is logically on shaky ground, not only because this case is not to be treated merely "bilaterally," but above all because the decisive question <must never be phrased in counterfactual form:> "What *would* you say, or feel, or think, or how *would* you like it, if you were he?", but always in the form "What *do* you say (*in propria persona*) about a hypothetical case in which you are in your victim's position?" (Hare, 1963, p. 108).

11. Kant, 1785, p. 68, fn. (English trans., p. 55, fn.). See Kelsen, 1960<sup>2</sup>, p. 367; Spendel, 1967, p. 513f.; also Singer 1963, pp. 308f., 312, with reference to Whately, 1857.

Thus, if the defendant were to say in court: "You wouldn't want to go to jail either, if you had stolen cars and finally had a bit of dough," the judge could grant the point and say: "You are absolutely right: in your place I would most certainly want precisely what you want right now, namely to be left alone to enjoy my booty in peace. But that isn't the point. The point is how I *right now* want myself to be treated in such a hypothetical case, and with regard to this I can only say: justly and in accordance with the law!" Hans Reiner (1948, pp. 90f., 84f.) has also drawn attention to such a result of the dialogue, and in this context one might recall the discussion concerning the death penalty as it was pursued by Rousseau, Kant, and Radbruch with the conceptual means of the social contract.<sup>12</sup>

## VII The 'Inversion' of the Golden Rule and Its Shortcomings

The Bochum Bartender's Model is also obviously on the minds of those who think that in view of the sometimes considerable differences between persons, it would be much more reliable and simpler not to ask oneself, in a thought experiment, how one would want to be treated in such a hypothetical situation, but rather to turn immediately to the person in question and ask him how he would like to be treated.

The discussion on the behavior of the drunken driver indicates why this won't do: according to such an "inversion" of the Golden Rule, as Singer (1963, pp. 294–96) calls this principle, we would have to treat each person according to his current wishes (not to say, according to his whims)—but I have already shown that these need not coincide with his well-considered or long-term interests, to say nothing of the interests of his fellow man. An additional reason is that in a given practical situation it is not always possible to ask or to discover how the other would like to be treated at the moment; indeed, there are situations—situations that are often of great moral interest—where it would not even be meaningful to assert that the other person wills or wishes *anything at all*. Take, for example, the question of what should be decided by a near relative or the doctor of someone who, as a result of an accident, stroke, or false narcosis, has been in a coma for an extended period of time and will presumably remain so for the rest of his life. Not only is it impossible to ask someone who is in such an unfortunate situation about his current wants and wishes; even talking about something like his 'current wishes' would, strictly speaking, be meaningless. The same would be true for an unconscious victim of a suicide attempt who can perhaps still be saved. In such situations, the inversion of the Golden Rule could at most be applied in a modified manner, that is, on the basis of asking the person in question, not in the midst of an actual case of emergency as

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12. Rousseau, 1762, Book 2, chap. 5; Kant, 1797, pp. 202f.; on the other hand Radbruch, 1914, 1963<sup>6</sup>, § 23, esp. pp. 271f. See also Beccaria, 1764, § 28.

to how he wants to be treated in this very situation, but rather, so to say, prophylactically and well in advance, as to how he wants to be treated in the future should such a situation arise. But apart from not always being extremely tactful, such a question, in view of the unavoidable generality of an abstract anticipation, could be less easily answered by him <who might possibly come to suffer or profit from one's future actions> than by the questioner, should he in fact be confronted with this problem in a concrete situation with all its wealth of details.

### VIII Justice Between the Generations: Abortion and the Golden Rule

But even in this modified form of the prophylactic inquiry, the inversion of the Golden Rule is not always applicable. Thus, one cannot ask the coming generations how they wish to be treated with reference to the storage of radioactive waste, the preservation of the human environment, and the economical use of finite resources. It is certainly correct that the human beings of the future do not yet have any wishes; but if we do not proceed too unreasonably in our planning, they *will* someday have wishes, and in this sense we can, indeed we must speak of the *interests* of future generations which must be safeguarded in the present. It lies in the *interest* of future generations that we currently act in such and such a way, meaning roughly (adopting suggestions from Hare and Radbruch<sup>13</sup>) that these generations will probably, sometime in the future, welcome the fact that we acted in this way rather than another, or that they could not reasonably will a contrary mode of action.

The ethical question of abortion can be dealt with in a manner similar to this approach to the problem of "justice between the generations" (compare Rawls, 1972). An embryo or fetus does not have wishes in any acceptable sense of the word, but if one allows it to grow into a developed human being, then the time will come at which it, or rather he or she, will want, wish, welcome, or regret something, and in this sense one can already say that this or that is or is not in its interest. Thus, one can also ask: "Would *I*, in the place of the person who will later most likely have developed from this embryo, approve or disapprove of my having been allowed to live?" The answer to this question depends, of course, on a variety of considerations—not the least of which seems to be whether a healthy and happy person is likely to develop from this embryo, or whether—perhaps because the mother had German measles (rubella) or took a tranquilizer containing thalidomide—there is reason to fear that the child will have to grow up with terrible deformities. On the basis of these considerations, Hare (1975) argues for a very liberal rule centered on the notion of "countervailing reasons" (p.

13. Hare, 1963, pp. 122, 157; Radbruch, 1914, 1963<sup>6</sup>, pp. 152, 160, 178.

221) or "good indications" (p. 214) (*Indikationslösung*), where this rule is, of course, to be understood not in a legal, but in a moral sense. But if one agrees with Hare (1963, p. 122; for a somewhat different version, see p. 157) that "to have an interest is, crudely speaking, for there to be something which one wants, or is likely in the future to want, or which is (or is likely to be) a means necessary or sufficient for the attainment of something which one wants (or is likely to want)," then one could argue in the following manner for a moral counterpart to a law allowing the mother to make her own decision up to a certain point in the pregnancy (*Fristenlösung*); the reader may decide whether the boundary between subtlety and sophistry has not been violated in this argument:

"If we kill this embryo, then it will never become a developed human being and thus will never will anything; thus by killing it, indeed just by virtue of killing it, we cannot infringe on its interests, for an embryo is a bearer of interests only if one allows it to grow into a willing subject." Against such a piece of reasoning, Hare (1975, p. 219) objects that it would be "strange if there were an act whose very performance made it impossible for it to be wrong"; and although this objection, as Hare himself admits, is "perhaps superficial," an argument according to which it would be permissible to kill an unborn human being, but not, for example, to defraud him of even the slightest part of his inheritance, would be almost as eccentric as the thesis, which seems to follow from Kant's ethics, that while it is indeed bad if a rich man allows a poor man to starve, it is even worse if the one lies to the other.

#### IX Methodological Reasons for a Generalized Form of the Golden Rule: Nathan and David

As can be seen from my last examples, I do not think that the function of the Golden Rule should be confined to admonishing one—or reminding one 'paranetically' to use a term Schüller (1973) took over from Stoic philosophy—that from the moral point of view one must not allot oneself a special position over his fellow man. Rather, it seems to me that the main task of the Golden Rule is to provide a method or an instrument by means of which one can recognize concrete duties in concrete cases.

It is true that one must ask oneself whether the Golden Rule in the version that I have been defending so far can really do this. Let me pose just one of the many questions that could be raised here, namely whether, on the basis of the thought experiment of putting myself in the position of the other, which is required by the Golden Rule, I can really convince myself of how I wish to be treated in every single case of a whole class of hypothetical situations.

When I have drunk too much, for example, do I really want my host to send me home in a taxi so that I have to pick up my car the next morning? Why don't I really want him to hire someone to return my car at his own ex-

pense, or to put his own bed at my disposal and care for me tenderly until I have recovered from my hangover? Although this kind of treatment might be in my interest, I would most certainly take care not to entertain, or at least not to express, such extravagant expectations. The reason for this seems to me to be that in judging how one wishes to be treated in a hypothetical case, one already has quite specific ideas of what is 'appropriate' or 'justified' or what one is 'entitled' to expect from others, and that means at the same time, what the others 'ought' to do in this case. Thus it would appear that it is not one's *wishes*, but rather one's ideas of *rights and duties* that lie behind the use of the Golden Rule, although one wants to use this moral principle precisely for the purpose of ascertaining one's duties in the specific case.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, there is the methodological question of how I can know, or in what manner I can make sure, that I want a specific kind of treatment for every single element of a whole class of hypothetical cases. The problem is that in case of doubt, I can learn how I want to be treated in an *actual* situation only from my own actions and reactions, since an 'inspection' of something like 'volition' or 'acts of will' seems to me to be an absurdity (see Hoche, 1973, sections 29–31); but at the present moment, while I am posing the question purely academically, no actions or reactions can finally convince me (beyond all doubt) how, once and for all, I want to be treated in hypothetical situations of a certain kind, should they arise one fine (or not so fine) day.

Since, in addition, as has just been shown, my wishes and expectations with reference to such hypothetical situations already appear to be 'disciplined' by various notions of rights and duties, one should ask whether, in arguing in terms of the Golden Rule, one really takes the question how *one oneself* wants to be treated in a class of *possible* situations as a point of departure. For there is an excellent possibility of discovering how, *in general*, I want a person to be treated by others, not by imagining *hypothetical* situations in which I cannot act and to which I cannot react, but by looking at situations that are either *real*, or that I at least *take to be real*, and to which I can therefore react in a definite and quite clear-cut manner.

An illuminating example of such a method can be found in the Old Testament, in the second book of Samuel, chapters 11 and 12. After King

14. With regard to this problem, see already Leibniz, 1765, Book 1, chap. 2, § 4. Note that this difficulty cannot be dealt with by merely referring to possible distinctions between the positive and negative Golden Rule. For just as I once and for all reject the alternative that my host allow me to drive home completely drunk, I could also reject the alternative that he ship me home in a taxi instead of taking care of me; that he expects me to pick up my car the next morning, rather than going to the 'minor' trouble of delivering it himself; that he make a bed for me on the rug of his study, rather than offering me the much more comfortable bed in his bedroom.

David had committed adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of the soldier Uriah, and in order to hush up the matter had sent Uriah to a certain hero's death, Nathan, a prophet who lived at David's court, came to the king and told him the following story:

"There were once two men in the same city, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had large flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing of his own except one little ewe lamb. He reared it himself, and it grew up in his home with his own sons. It ate from his dish, drank from his cup and nestled in his arms; it was like a daughter to him. One day a traveller came to the rich man's house, and he, too mean to take something from his own flocks and herds to serve his guest, took the poor man's lamb and served up that" (12:1-4).

"David was very angry, and burst out, 'As the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die!'" (12: 5).

Since the identity of the 'dramatis personae' remains completely open in this story (since, in other words, neither Nathan nor David use 'individual constants'), the king could, by means of his passionate reaction, convince not only those, especially Nathan, who heard him, but last and not least also *himself*, beyond any doubt, of the fact that he accepted the following universal buletic sentence: "I will that no one do what this rich man has done." This proposition is, however, logically equivalent to the following: "I will that everyone abstain from doing what this rich man has done."

Thus, whereas normal "there is not"-propositions, such as those found in the empirical sciences, and those universal propositions which are logically equivalent to them, can only be *falsified*, as is generally known at least since Popper's *Logic of Scientific Discovery* (1934), propositions in which the buletic operator "I will" (or "I want") stands in front of the negated existential quantifier or in front of the universal quantifier can be *verified*; or, to put it more simply, by means of a single emotional or 'volitional' experience such as David's, I can convince myself of the truth of a proposition of the following form: "I will that there be no one who in a situation of such and such a kind treats anybody in such and such a manner," or, logically equivalent: "I will that everybody in situations of such and such a kind refrain from treating anybody in such and such a manner."<sup>15</sup>

This would no longer hold for a less universal sentence—namely, for a sentence in which the scope of the buletic operator includes a personal constant. For example, had Nathan told the king "You are the man!" (12: 7) a bit earlier, then David would probably have reacted in a very different manner. But not merely the absence of personal constants, which excludes any 'special pleading' in Hare's sense, that is, every plea in *my* own favor,<sup>16</sup> is decisive here, but also the *negativity* of the story, the reaction and the

15. With regard to these considerations, see the formalized presentation in Hoche, 1967a, § 3.9.

16. Hare, 1963, pp. 33, 53, 76, 107; Edwards, 1955, IX. 4, p. 215.

buletic sentence (see cf. also Hoche, 1932, pp. 8f). Had Nathan told the story of an *exemplary* action, then the king would perhaps have reacted with admiration: "What a saint!" or "What a hero!", but that would not have shown him to subscribe to a universal buletic sentence such as "I will that every person act in that way in a similar situation."

#### X The Generalized Form of the Golden Rule Is Also Applicable to Duties to Oneself. It Is Analytically Included in the Concept of Obligation

The considerations advanced in section IX have some interesting consequences which I would like to sketch in closing:

1. It seems to me that the elaboration of these thoughts might make it possible to put a less vulnerable theory of moral reasoning in place of Hare's (1963, chapters 6–7) theory of the 'Golden-Rule Arguments,' which I have criticized in a short investigation (see Hoche 1976b, v; §3.6, 1976a, §3.6 §3.9).

2. This seems to open up a practicable way of making the controversial and often rather wishy-washy concept of a "sense of rightness" (*Rechtsgefühl*) more precise and of building a bridge between Hare's 'universal prescriptivism' and intuitionistic or axiological metaethics. Reiner (1948, pp. 88–98) must be mentioned once again in this context for having had the merit of showing that the Golden Rule has also been passed down, and indeed may preeminently be understood, as having the 'essential form' of a "rule of autonomy" <which, however, he takes to be but one of the three "essential forms" of the Golden Rule>; but his treatment of this aspect is, among other reasons, slightly depreciated in that he does not pay enough attention to the two features of *negativity* and *universality* which I have just emphasized as characterizing the decisive "I will" sentences.

3. Finally, it appears that a sentence of the form "I will that no one treat *me* so and so in a situation of such and such kind," which is the basis for any application of the Golden Rule, owes its entire plausibility to the fact that it is merely a special case of a universal buletic sentence which is capable of immediate verification and has the following form: "I will that no one treat *anyone at all* thus and so in a situation of such and such kind."

If this be true, we should think of giving the Golden Rule *itself* a *more general* form, reconstructing it in the form of the following ought-sentence: "If I will that no one treat anyone at all in such a manner in such a situation, then I ought to treat no one in such a manner in such a situation."<sup>17</sup> Now this generalized form of the Golden Rule, which is <I think> the only one that can be universally used, is not merely a philosophical construction. Rather, it is a more precise form of variants of the Golden Rule which have been

17. See Hoche, 1976a, § 3.10.

passed down from the earliest periods of the Occident and which I passed over in Section II because of their quite different form: How can we lead the best and most righteous life? By not ourselves doing that which we criticize in others.<sup>18</sup> Refrain from doing that which angers you in your neighbor.<sup>19</sup> To the best of my ability I shall refrain from doing that for which I reproach my neighbor.<sup>20</sup>

In such generalized versions, however, the Golden Rule has two peculiarities which should finally be able to rehabilitate it in German moral philosophy:

1. In the generalized version, the Golden Rule is not vulnerable to Kant's objection (1785, p. 55 fn.) that it does not contain "the ground . . . of duties to one's self." For this version mentions only a negative attitude to the actions of others, without one having necessarily to presuppose that these actions affect someone *else*. Hence, that which Lutz (1964, p. 471)—following Reiner (1948, pp. 88 f; 1934, pp. 11–16)—says about the form of the Golden Rule that is ascribed to Pittakos, holds for *each* of the generalized forms of the rule that I have mentioned: "Judgment is passed on a form of behavior itself, regardless of whom it affects and whether it is perhaps an action of the other which affects only himself." In this manner the range of applicability of Golden Rule arguments, in an appropriate sense of the word, becomes much larger than, for example, seems self-evident to Hare (1963), and also includes the entire complex of possible duties to oneself (and thus, I take it, even of 'ideals' in Hare's sense).<sup>21</sup>

2. In my *Elemente einer Anatomie der Verpflichtung* I showed that—on the basis of the idea of analyzing obligation sentences in terms of "builetic logic," which I have suggested there for independent reasons—the logical paraphrase <or analysans> of the generalized Golden Rule is *L*-true (logically true), which means that this rule itself is an analytic sentence (compare in contrast, Hare, 1963, section 3.2). This result seems to explain the historical fact "that the Golden Rule has arisen independently in several places" (Philippidis, 1929, p. 96). The reason for this might well be that its truth lies exclusively in the meaning of the expressions that occur in its formulation, especially in the concepts of "willing" and "having an obligation."

18. Thales (according to Diogenes Laertius I, p. 36): *πῶς ἀν ἀριστα καὶ δικαιότατα βιώσαιμεν; ἐὰν ἀ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐπιτιμῶμεν, αγνότοι μὴ δρῶμεν.*
19. Pittakos, one of the Seven Wise Men (after Stobäus III, 1, p. 172 - quoted in Reiner 1948, p. 75; see also Spendel 1967, p. 493): *όσα νεμεσάς τῷ πλησίον, αὐτὸς μὴ ποίει.*
20. Herodotus (III, 142 - quoted in Dihle, 1962, pp. 96f.; cf. Philippidis, 1929, p. 44; Reiner, 1934, pp. 11f.): *έγὼ δὲ τὰ τῷ πέλας ἐπιπλήσσω, αὐτὸς κατὰ δύναμιν οὐ ποιήσω.*<sup>ii</sup>
21. Cf. also Thomasius, 1705, book 1, chap. 6, §§ 40-42, who lists the principle of the "honestum": "Quod vis, ut alii sibi faciant, tute tibi facies": "Treat yourself as you would have others treat themselves," before the principles of the "iustum" and the "decorum"—"Quod tibi non vis fieri, alteri ne feceris" or "Quod vis ut alii tibi faciant, tu ipsis facies." For duties to oneself, see also Hoche, 1975, p. XII.

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

<sup>i</sup> German law requires a bartender to stop an inebriated guest from driving home. The *Westdeutsche Allgemeine* newspaper tested compliance by sending a young actor, who pretended to get very drunk and then loudly announced his intention of driving home, to various bars.

<sup>ii</sup> Because of typographical error, “ποιησω” is incorrectly spelled in the original published article.



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# THE PROBLEM OF TRUTH IN KANT\*

Gerold Prauss

Translated by David Partch

Kant prefaces the “Transcendental Analytic,” which makes up the “First Division” of the “Transcendental Logic”<sup>1</sup> in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, with an “Introduction.”<sup>1</sup> In four short chapters he sketches out the “Idea of a Transcendental Logic,”<sup>2</sup> which he develops in what follows.

This introductory sketch consists mainly in the distinction of transcendental logic from other kinds of logic. Kant calls the latter “general” or “pure” logic, which is then characterized by all of the essential features of the science known as formal logic. It “abstracts from all content” of cognition, that is, “from all relation of cognition to the object,” and “considers only the logical form of cognitions in relation to one another.”<sup>3</sup> As a “science” which

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The problem of truth, if one does not restrict it to its formal-logical or semantical sense, remains to the present day unresolved. With his transcendental logic Kant began a new attempt at its resolution, which, however, he failed to follow up. The present article attempts to prepare the way for this undertaking. As in the case of my “Frege’s Contribution to the Theory of Knowledge” (to appear in *CGP*, Vol. 3) it is preliminary to my *Einführung in die Erkenntnistheorie* (compare note 69) in which I attempt to carry out this task.

1. Immanuel Kant, *Akademie-Ausgabe*, edited by the Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: Georg Riemer Verlag, 1920f.), (Vol.) III. (page) 83. (lines) 1-4; or I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (CPR), translated by Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1929), p. 102 (= B 89).
2. Kant, III.75.5f.; or CPR, p. 92 (= B 75).
3. Kant, III.76.33f.; or CPR, p. 94-5 (= B 78-9).

"has to do . . . only with principles a priori"<sup>4</sup> it is, exactly parallel to mathematics,<sup>5</sup> "a demonstrated doctrine, and everything in it must be certain entirely a priori."<sup>6</sup>

Transcendental logic is then to be differentiated from this formal logic in the following decisive manner. Although it is also to be considered general and pure and based on principles a priori, it is nonetheless supposed to be a logic "in which we do not abstract from the entire content of cognition . . . that is, from all relation of cognition to the object . . ." but rather only from "empirical content." It is thus conceptualized by Kant as a science "which should contain solely the rules of the pure thought of an object."<sup>7</sup> It is comprised of the knowledge "that . . . and how certain notions (intuitions or concepts)," although they "are not of empirical origin . . . yet relate a priori to objects of experience."<sup>8</sup> In other words, it is the knowledge of those general and pure conditions which must be met whenever something occurs which could be referred to as experience; and that means: empirical cognition of an empirical object or the empirical object of empirical cognition.

In the process of distinguishing between transcendental and formal logic Kant suddenly addresses himself to a problem which at first glance appears not to have any connection with the present context: that is, the problem of truth. "The question, famed of old, by which logicians were supposed to be driven into a corner . . . is the question: What is truth?"<sup>9</sup> It does not become clear until after that there is an important relationship between the distinction of transcendental from formal logic and the question "What is truth?"

This relationship is obscured, however, by the extreme brevity of the text, that is, of the "Introduction," making certain passages hardly understandable. The following analysis of the text attempts, therefore, to make the connection clear by disclosing the actual line of thought taken by Kant.

Indeed the very first sentence following the question "What is truth?" has often been misunderstood. Kant continues, "The nominal definition of truth, that is, that it is the agreement of cognition with its object, is assumed here<sup>10</sup> as granted." Hegel, for example, interprets this sentence by assuming that the word "here" refers to Kant's "Introduction" itself and, thus, to the *Critique of Pure Reason*. This would mean that Kant himself wanted to bring forth a philosophical doctrine for which this nominal definition of

4. Kant, III.76.15,29; or CPR, p. 94 (= B 77-8).

5. Cf. Kant, III.477,481; or CPR, p. 585,590 (= B 754-5,762).

6. Kant, III.77.1f.; or CPR, p. 95 (= B 78).

7. Kant, III.77.22-31; or CPR, p. 95 (= B 79-80).

8. Kant, III.78.8-15; or CPR, p. 96 (= B 80-1).

9. Kant, III.79.5-9; or CPR, p. 97 (= B 82).

10. Kant, III.79.9-11; or CPR, p. 97 (= B 82).

truth must likewise be "assumed as granted."<sup>11</sup> Brentano<sup>12</sup> and Heidegger,<sup>13</sup> taking Brentano's lead, both interpreted this sentence in the same way as Hegel.

At several points in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, however, it becomes evident that just the opposite is correct. Truth, as the agreement of cognition with its object, is anything but "assumed as granted." Indeed, in a certain sense, which must be clarified later, it is the very theme which is to be developed.<sup>14</sup> Transcendental logic itself is to be considered as "a logic of the truth,"<sup>15</sup> as Kant himself states shortly thereafter.

If, therefore, the word "here" does not refer to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, to what then does it refer? The answer to this question can be revealed by taking a closer look at the sense of the preceding sentence. Whereas the main clause is written in the present tense, in which Kant always represents his own doctrine, the subordinate clause suddenly appears in the historical past tense. This indicates that Kant is referring to an historical situation<sup>16</sup> in which "one"<sup>iii</sup> (meaning, of course, the sceptics<sup>17</sup>) demanded a definition of truth from the logicians in order to "drive (them) into a corner."<sup>18</sup>

11. G.W.F. Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, edited by H. Glockner (Stuttgart: Fr. Frommanns verlag, 1950f.), V.27; or Hegel, *The Science of Logic*.
12. Cf. Franz Brentano, *Wahrheit und Evidenz* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1930), p. 13.
13. Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1957), p. 215; or Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (London: SCM Press, 1962), p. 258.
14. Cf. Kant, III.145.21-25, III.169.8-14, III.203.14-19, III.337.38, III.426.31f., III.532.6,14f.; or CPR. p. 194,220, 258,438,532,645 (= B 196-7,236,296,517, 670,848-9).
15. Kant, III.82.6, III.130.26, III.139.7-10, III.202.16; or CPR, p. 100, 176, 186, 257 (= B 87,170,185,294-5). Further: Friedrich Maywald, "Über Kants transzendentale Logik oder die Logik der Wahrheit" in: *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, Vol. 25, 1912, p. 426. Of course, this characteristic refers especially to the "Transcendental Analytic," whereas the specific characteristic of the "Transcendental Dialectic" is that of a "logic of illusion." However, because it has the function of discovering just this illusion, the "Transcendental Logic" can, as a whole, be viewed as a logic of truth. Cf. III.82.24-29.
16. I am indebted to an unpublished article by Manfred Kleinschneider (Mainz) for pointing out what the word, "here," actually refers to in this context. Kleinschneider convincingly demonstrates that Kant is most likely referring to an historical situation of the classical question-and-answer exchange involving the logicians and the sceptics. Possible sources for Kant could have been either Sextus Empiricus himself (*πρὸς μαθηματικούς* of which the seventh book is *πρὸς τοὺς λογικούς*) or more probably a not yet identified secondary source, which can be traced back to Sextus Empiricus. Cf. further: H. Heimsoeth, D. Henrich, G. Tonelli (Ed.), *Studien zu Kants philosophischer Entwicklung*, Vol. 6 (Hildesheim: Olms, 1967), especially p. 93 (including the 2nd footnote) and further pp. 98f., 107.
17. Cf. e.g. Kant, IX.50.11.
18. Kant, III. 79.5f.

It must be observed, however, that Kant is not alluding to this historical situation for its own sake. He is not concerned with giving an historical account. He is only interested in what might be considered typical of this situation. That also explains why everything which follows,<sup>19</sup> although it continues to refer to this situation, is likewise given in the present tense.<sup>20</sup>

This clarifies what is actually indicated by the word "here." Kant uses the word to help point out what is characteristic of this historical situation. Whenever one asks a logician the question "What is truth?", which, for instance, happened to be the case in (classical) antiquity, then the nominal definition of truth, as the agreement of cognition with its object, is always being "assumed as granted." It must, however, be admitted that the word "here," in connection with the use of the present tense, can easily give the impression that Kant means the *Critique of Pure Reason* and, therefore, his own doctrine, that is, his transcendental logic. But, as a matter of fact, it must be remembered that this whole discussion only serves the purpose of distinguishing between transcendental and formal logic, as was shown to be Kant's aim in the "Introduction," which is a sketch of the "Idea of a Transcendental Logic." Apparently it is precisely the problem of truth which points out the principal difference between transcendental and formal logic.<sup>21</sup> Kant appears to be addressing the question "What is truth?" not to logicians, as the sceptics did, but rather to himself as a transcendental philosopher. And that nominal definition of truth, which is "assumed as granted" when asking the logician of formal logic what the nature of truth is, is not at all assumed as granted by Kant.

However plausible this explanation of the word "here" may seem at first glance, it does raise new difficulties when further examined. For if it implies that Kant differentiates between transcendental and formal logic by referring to the question of truth and in such a way that the question as well as its answer must necessarily fall within the realm of transcendental logic, how then can it be understood that Kant calls the question "absurd in itself" and its answer "unnecessary" and "absurd," as well?<sup>22</sup> Certainly he does not want to admit that the purpose of a "logic of truth," as he calls his transcendental logic, is to give unnecessary and absurd answers to absurd questions. But what then could he have meant by all this?

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19. With the exception of what is included in brackets, "(as the ancients said)," which, being historical reminiscence, is naturally given in the imperfect tense. Cf. III.29.19.

20. This becomes especially clear in line 11 (Kant, III.79.11; or CPR, p. 97; or B 82). There Kant does not say, "the question asked *was* . . ." but rather, "the question asked *is* . . ." And that is the equivalent of saying, "Anytime, just as then, one asks a logician this question, one is demanding to know. . ." See also: J. Locke, *Essay*, Book 4, Ch. 5, §1.

21. This also becomes clear in other passages in Kant, e.g. Reflection 2162.

22. Cf. Kant, III.79.15-18; or CPR, p. 97 (= B 82-3).

A brief grammatical explanation is necessary in order to gain insight into this problem. The whole clause in which Kant formulated this statement reads: ". . . if the question is absurd in itself and calls for unnecessary answers. . ." We are dealing here with the kind of clause which, although it has the grammatical form of a conditional ("if") clause, obviously in this context has the logical function of an assertion, which is derived logically by combining a conditional clause with the corresponding positive statement and which usually begins with "because" (*weil*) or "as" (*da*). In German in order to begin a clause with "if" (*wenn*) an inversion of the predicate and the complement must take place. For example: "Die Sonne scheint warm" must be changed to "Wenn die Sonne warm scheint."

The Kantian clause we want to examine also involves such an inversion, which means that the predicate "is" (*ist*) appears after the complement "absurd" (*ungereimt*).<sup>iv</sup> The resulting word order for the expressions "question" (*Frage*), "in itself" (*an sich*) and "absurd" (*ungereimt*) creates an ambiguity. Because of its placement between the two other expressions we can interpret "in itself" as referring either to "question. . ." or to ". . .absurd." There is a tendency to be misled into associating "in itself" with "the question" because of the frequent occurrence of similar expressions such as "thing in itself." If we were to reverse the word order by dropping the word "*wenn*," we would then be left with "the question in itself is absurd." And that would be more or less the equivalent of saying: "the question, as such, is absurd."<sup>v</sup> However, this leads to the difficulty mentioned above. Accordingly, not only Kant himself in his transcendental logic, but all philosophers before and after him, as well, who sought to find out the nature of truth, would have addressed themselves to a question which, as such, is absurd.

It cannot be assumed, however, that the mere possibility of reversing an if-inversion in the above manner is enough to justify the interpretation that Kant had such a word order in mind. Because, as a result of the inversion, 'in itself' follows immediately upon 'the question,' the reader is tempted to contract them into one expression. But this is not compelling. The other possibility, which is just as legitimate within the structure of the (German) language, has the additional advantage of excluding certain difficulties with respect to the conceptual interpretation of the sentence. The inversion "*wenn die Frage an sich ungereimt ist*" can just as well be transformed into "*die Frage ist an sich ungereimt*" (the question is in itself absurd). According to this interpretation "in itself" is to be associated with "absurd," and therefore be read as the colloquial expression "in itself" which ordinarily is used to mean "actually." As a result the clause can be read to mean: "the question is actually absurd."

But what have we gained by this result? What then is "actually absurd"? We have seen that it is not the question "What is truth?", *as such*, although the demand for a definition of truth must be "absurd" in some way. But if not the question, "as such," then in what other sense can it be said to be absurd?

In order to answer this it is necessary to keep in mind that in chapter III of the "Introduction" to the "Transcendental Analytic" Kant, from the very beginning, only directs his attention to formal logic and to the logician of formal logic. The title already makes this clear by referring to "general logic,"<sup>23</sup> which, as has been mentioned, is Kant's term for formal logic. Indeed, in the very first sentence he does not simply speak of the question "What is truth?", *as such*, but rather of the question *as it would be treated by logicians of formal logic*, that is, as a question "by which *logicians*"<sup>24</sup> were supposed to be driven into a corner. . .<sup>25</sup> The question "What is truth?", as such, is anything but absurd. On the contrary, as a transcendental question it is the very theme of transcendental logic. According to Kant it is only absurd when posed to a logician who restricts himself to formal logic.<sup>26</sup>

Now it can be understood why Kant suddenly brings up the problem of truth at this point. This problem plays a decisive part in the outline of the "Idea of a Transcendental Logic," which in the "Introduction" is portrayed as the distinction between transcendental and formal logic. Because formal logic abstracts from *all* content of cognition, whereas transcendental logic does *not*, and because truth "involves just this very content,"<sup>27</sup> it is clear that the question as to what is the nature of truth leads precisely to the criterion for the essential difference between these two sciences. According to Kant transcendental logic has the distinction of being able to ask and answer the question about the nature of truth, whereas the same question within the

23. Kant, III.79.2; or CPR, p. 97 (= B 82).

24. The fact that Kant refers to the logician of *formal logic* with the term "logician" alone becomes evident, for instance, in the passage III.76.31; or CPR, p. 94 (= B 78). In the same manner Kant often shortens "formal logic" simply to "logic." (e.g. III.141.29 and frequently in the "Introduction;" cf. III.80.2, 14, 16, 20, 27, 29). However, Kant never refers to transcendental logic in the reverse fashion as merely "logic" nor does he ever call the transcendental philosopher simply as "logician."

25. Kant, III.79.5f.; or CPR, p. 97 (= B 82).

26. Although in an entirely intuitive manner, Kant is doing something here which is quite reasonable: Modern methodology demonstrates correctly that expressions used and to a certain extent understood colloquially do not necessarily always have a precise meaning. Colloquial usage is often too vague, because it serves several purposes and therefore must remain flexible. That applies also to the question of truth. Like all other colloquially imprecise expressions it, too, is given a precise and verifiable meaning only when understood in terms of an existing or yet to be established conceptual system which is constructed according to exactly defined rules. The question of truth as such, that is, in its colloquial form, is therefore neither "sensible" nor "absurd." The interesting thing for Kant is then that it becomes absurd when it is naively applied to formal logic by taking "truth" to mean the opposite of "incorrectness," as the colloquial usage might suggest. In terms of another system, however, and thus in another sense, Kant views the same question not only as sensible but as answerable, as well.

27. Kant, III.79.28f; or CPR, p. 97 (= B 83).

framework of formal logic is merely absurd. The latter science is so incapable of deciding what truth is that it must on the contrary be "assumed as granted" in order to be able to assert itself at all.<sup>28</sup>

In this manner Kant succeeds in shortening his exposition of the distinction between formal and transcendental logic. Kant portrays with a sketchy, but very effective outline the difficulties in which a logician finds himself when asked the question "What is truth?" by giving a concrete example. The nature of the situation having been shown in general, it then becomes an easy matter to understand any further details.

In the first place it must be observed that Kant does not maintain that a logician, when demanded to give a definition of truth, will *necessarily* arrive at difficulties. For this reason, when giving his account of the attempt in antiquity "to drive (the logician) into the corner," he also maintains that this was merely the *intention*.<sup>29</sup> Actually there is not compulsive reason for assuming that this question should create any difficulty for a logician. In fact the question is of no consequence to his science at all and therefore need not even be considered by him.

Of course truth is relevant to the logician, inasmuch as he deals with statements which are said to be either true or false, that is, with cognitions or judgments.<sup>30</sup> As a logician, however, he is solely concerned with "the logical form of cognitions in relation to one another."<sup>31</sup> He establishes "logical form" in terms of "universal and necessary rules of the understanding," a form with which *all* cognition must be "in complete accordance" in order to avoid being false merely on the basis of its logical form.<sup>32</sup> For Kant this amounts to nothing other than the principle of contradiction; and contradiction must be avoided at all costs. "Whatever contradicts these rules is false. For the understanding would thereby . . . contradict itself."<sup>33</sup> But the

28. Quine is a good example of how appropriate Kant's description of formal logic is even up to the present. He begins the first paragraph of *Methods of Logic*, 2nd edition (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959) with the simple observation: "The peculiarity of statements. . . is that they admit of truth and falsity. . ." Quine, too, considers the meaning of "truth" to be "assumed as granted" with respect to the development of formal logic. Indeed, the corresponding nominal definition of truth, as a mere "commonplace," is even left out of formal logic itself and treated separately in an "Introduction."

29. Kant, III.79.5f.

30. It must be observed here that Kant is using the word "cognition" (*Erkenntnis*) at this point in a different sense than it is usually used today, inasmuch as one can speak of false as well as true "cognition." Cf. III.79.22; or CPR, p. 97 (= B 83): ". . . for cognition (*Erkenntnis*) is false, if it. . ." The use of "cognition" in this sense, that is, as the equivalent of "judgement," can also be found before Kant; e.g. in George Friedrich Meier's *Auszug aus der Vernunftlehre*, (Halle: Gebaur; 1752), Kant, XVI p. 237f.

31. Kant, III.77.23f.; or CPR, p. 95 (= B 79).

32. Kant, III.80.3 with 9; or CPR, p. 98 (= B 83-4).

33. Kant, III.80.5f.; or CPR, p. 98 (= B 84).

rules of formal logic could never prove satisfactory as an answer to the question "What is truth?", "because cognitions are false whenever they are contradictory; but they are not necessarily true, when they are not."<sup>34</sup> We might say today that they are merely consistent.<sup>35</sup> In other words, merely giving the "negative condition of all truth" does not answer the question about the nature of truth. "But further than this logic cannot go."<sup>36</sup>

But in spite of the fact that an adequate account of the nature of truth cannot be expected of a logician, Kant nonetheless chose to begin the discussion with a situation in which a logician is being asked this very question. However, even if it is established that this question, because of its own nature, need not necessarily lead a logician into difficulties, there are still two possibilities left open to him: either he is aware of this or he is not.

If he is, then he will rightfully refuse to answer the question and point out to whom it is properly to be addressed. The fact that he cannot give an answer could then never be seen as evidence for his "ignorance," in which the "emptiness" of his science is supposed to be demonstrated.<sup>37</sup> Ignorance of this sort would only be possible, if the corresponding knowledge were possible at least in principle, which is not the case within the framework of formal logic, but rather only in terms of a transcendental logic.

But assuming the logician did know this and therefore never let himself be driven into a corner, what would that mean? Would that not mean that he had understood the basic tenants of transcendental philosophy and had taken the first step away from formal and in the direction of transcendental logic? Exactly this is what never happened before Kant. One searches in vain for a truly Kantian transcendental philosophy prior to Kant. And that is

34. Kant, IX.51.32f.

35. Here it becomes apparent that Kant views formal logic as being merely concerned with logical falsehood or consistency. Logical truth, which has become very important in the meantime, is something very trivial for Kant and is therefore not even mentioned. (Cf. e.g. Quine, *Methods of Logic*, p. 29: "'Validity' is not to be thought of as a term of praise. When a schema is valid, any statement whose form that schema depicts is bound to be, in some sense, trivial. It will be trivial in the sense that it conveys no real information. . . .") The logical truth of which Kant occasionally speaks (cf. IX.51f.) should not be confused with logical truth in the modern sense. Kant thinks of it only as that cognition which is "logically sound" but, in fact, can be false. His theory of analytical judgements, which comes closest to the modern concept of logical truth, is not even mentioned in this context. See however: III.141f.; or CPR, p. 189 (= B 189).

36. Kant, III.80.14F.; or CPR, p. 98 (= B 84). Should it do this nonetheless, that is, if it mistakes the mere "negative" or "necessary" condition of truth, which it has at hand, as being sufficient, then it claims to be an organon of the cognition of truths; whereas it in fact only turns out to be a "logic of illusion" or "dialectic" which Kant distinguishes from the "analytic" as logic in the actual sense. See also: III.80f.; or CPR, p. 98-9 (= B 84f.). Further: Reflection 2177.

37. Kant, III.79.7f.; or CPR, p. 97 (= B 83).

why Kant, from the very beginning, assumes only the second of the above mentioned possibilities: that is, that neither the queried logician nor the inquiring sceptics were aware of this peculiarity of the question about truth. The only one who knew this and who expressed that knowledge by adding ". . . intended to<sup>38/vi</sup> (be driven into a corner)" was Kant himself, the transcendental philosopher.

And yet there is another consideration which remains to be made. Even if we can be certain that before Kant there was not knowledge of this peculiarity of the question about truth and that therefore transcendental philosophy did not exist, this does not mean that this question was not asked and that no attempts were made to answer it before Kant. Although the question, as such, is not absurd, in pre-kantian philosophy there was always the danger that it *appear* to be absurd. The reason for this is that before the establishment of transcendental philosophy there was in fact no proper framework within which the question could be posed. That meant that by necessity it had to be posed in an area foreign to it, namely in that of the logician, because his was the only science which had anything at all to do with the truth.

By maintaining that the peculiarity of this question, if not recognized, will only create insurmountable difficulties for a logician, Kant not only describes a particular situation taken from history, which he offers as an example, nor only a certain type of historical situation, but the general nature of the situation in which the whole history of philosophy before him had found itself, as well. And by pointing out in detail which difficulties the logician will inevitably be met with, he is able to demonstrate just why it is necessary, from the point of view of the question itself, to change this untenable situation. In order to avoid making it appear to be absurd to ask about the nature of truth, this question must be completely lifted out of the sphere of formal logic and provided its own foundation by establishing a new, transcendental logic.

What then are the difficulties this question will cause the logician, as long as its transcendental nature remains hidden? Again we are confronted with two possibilities. As long as logicians do not realize that the question, as well as the answer, does not lie within the province of their science, they can only do one of two things, when asked the question: either they will make an attempt to answer it or they will not, in which latter case they will "confess their ignorance and consequently the emptiness of their whole art."<sup>39</sup> For when the logician, who is never concerned with anything other than "the logical form of cognitions in relation to one another"<sup>40</sup> and thus always deals merely with particular cognitions, is asked about truth, he is in fact being

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38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Kant, III.77.23f; or CPR, p. 95 (= B 79).

asked nothing less than "what is the general and sure criterion of the truth of any and every cognition."<sup>41</sup>

But how could a logician be in a position to fulfill what this question demands of him?

When the logician is asked the question of what *truth* is, he is being asked to give an account of what it means for cognition to agree with its object, whereby the nominal definition of truth is "assumed as granted."<sup>42</sup> But if truth "consists in the agreement of cognition with its object, that object must thereby be distinguished from other objects. For cognition is false, if it does not agree with the object to which it is related, even though it contains something which may be valid of other objects."<sup>43</sup>

Nonetheless, as long as the question has the form "what is. . .?", it is demanding to know something *essential*, that is, something which can only be defined by a "general" and "sufficient"<sup>44</sup> criterion. But a "general criterion of truth" has to be one that "would be valid for all cognitions disregarding any difference between their objects."<sup>45/vii</sup> On the other hand, however, the truth must depend precisely on this difference, if it is to be defined as the agreement of particular cognitions with their objects. The question "What is truth?", if it is taken in the sense which it assumes when it is posed to a logician, must then remain unanswered. The logician then cannot help "confessing his ignorance" in the matter.

But there is still the other possibility. The logician, who does not give any answer to the question but rather confesses his ignorance, may not know it is in principle impossible to answer, whereas he may know that it is factually impossible. Yet it is easily conceivable that a logician would not know even this, in which case he might try to give an answer to the question "What is truth?" In Kant's opinion any logician who makes such an attempt is "obliged . . . to have recourse to a pitiful sophism."<sup>46/viii</sup> And it is precisely such logicians that are being referred to especially in the second paragraph of the

41. Kant, III.79.11f.; or CPR, p. 97 (= B 82). The sentence, "the question asked is," can only be understood as an explanation of the meaning of the question of truth. It means: "By asking a logician the question, "What is truth?" one is demanding to know. . ." Cf. footnote 20.

42. Kant, III.79.11; or CPR, p. 97 (= B 82).

43. Kant, III.79.20-24; or CPR, p. 97 (= B 83).

44. Cf. Kant, III.79.12; or CPR, p. 97 (= B 82). When Kant speaks here of a "sure" criterion, he surely means a "sufficient" criterion, as is shown by comparison with III.79.30f.; or CPR, p. 98 (= B 83): "a sufficient and at the same time general criterion. . ." See also: III.80.8,26; or CPR, p. 98 (= B 84,85).

45. Kant, III.79.25f.; or CPR, p. 97 (= B 83).

46. Kant, III.79.7; or CPR, p. 97 (= B 82). In the second edition the word "*Diallele*" has been replaced by "*Dialexe*." This *hapax legomenon* in Kant is, however, surely a misprint due to a mistake in the process of resetting the 2nd edition. As can be seen in the Reflections 2143 and 2151, Kant tended to write this word with the incorrect form, "Dialele," in the 1st edition.

present chapter,<sup>47</sup> in which Kant characterizes them in a somewhat scornful manner.

Kant assumes that it is “a great and necessary proof of intelligence and insight” to “know what questions may be reasonably asked.” Not only anyone who asks the logicians about the nature of truth, a question which thereby becomes “absurd” and demands “unnecessary answers,” but also the logicians themselves lack this intelligence and insight, inasmuch as they are not aware that it is in principle impossible to define truth in terms of their science. Thus the “shame (of) the propounder of the question” pertains also to the logician who, by confessing his ignorance, accepts it as justified. But the real “disadvantage,”<sup>48</sup> arises when the “incautious listener” is thereby “betray(ed). . . into absurd answers,” thus offering a “ludicrous spectacle,” in that he adds to the absurdity of “milking a he-goat” by “holding a sieve underneath.”

What then does Kant mean by “sophism” (Diallele), and what exactly is it about the logician’s attempt which forces him into this “sophism?” There is not much in the way of an answer to this in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and it is therefore necessary to confer with other passages in which Kant indicates more definitely what he means. In particular we must refer to his *Reflections on Logic*.<sup>49</sup>

It remains possible, though, to conclude only on the basis of what is said in the *Critique of Pure Reason* what single path the logician can take in order to give a definition of truth. In this respect Kant states that the nominal definition of truth, as the agreement of cognition with its object, is already “assumed as granted.” Anyone who is in the position to ask, answer or even want to understand the question “What is truth?” must be making implicit reference to this sense of “truth,” which, according to Kant, is given in the nominal definition. It means that for any given expression another can be found, which usually serves the purpose of displaying further relevant information, and which can be substituted *salve veritate* for the former in all possible contexts.<sup>50</sup> Should the logician want to answer the question, he must then explain in what way any particular cognition agrees with its object. For if the nominal definition is assumed as granted, it is obvious from the very beginning that the question “What is truth?” means the same as: “What is the agreement of a cognition with its object?”

47. Cf. Kant, III.79.13-19; or CPR, p. 97 (= B 82-3).

48. Of course, the *Logic* as collected by Jäsche is also useful. But one must exercise caution with it, especially with respect to those statements given by Jäsche and not by Kant himself. In this respect special attention must be given the passage in which Jäsche characterizes “Diallele” as a “circle” (IX.50.9f.), whereas Kant himself continually uses the expression “Diallele” (Reflections 2143 and 2151 and V.381.29), although he is perfectly familiar with the expression “circle” in that sense.

49. See also Kant’s characterization of the nominal definition (IV.158.30f.; or CPR, p. 261 (= A 241)).

It is already clear that the logician is only concerned with particular cognitions. He is thus forced into giving an account of the agreement of cognition with its object in terms of such particular cognitions and their corresponding particular objects.

To give an example we might consider the true cognition or judgement,<sup>50</sup> "The sun is shining." What does this judgement refer to? Undoubtedly it is the *fact* that the sun is shining.<sup>51</sup> If the logician now wants to explain in which manner this cognition agrees with its "object," his first possibility is to say: If I maintain that my judgement, "The sun is shining," is true, that is, that it agrees with its object, this merely means the same as: "Upon my judgement the sun is shining and, in fact, the sun *is* shining." In other words, the statement, "The sun is shining," is true or can be said to agree with its object, because the sun is shining.

The logician is even able to generalize this explanation for all true judgements with the help of variables. The resulting generalization could then be given as "X is true, because p," "X" being a variable for the name of any true judgement, the colloquial expression of which can be indicated by using quotation marks, and "p" being a variable for the judgement itself. But the word "because" is used in this context only because it is assumed beforehand that only true judgements are to be considered. This can be left open, however, by substituting "if" for "because" and arriving at "X is true, if p" and "X is false, if not p," which, as is generally known, can be shortened to "X is true, if and only if p."

But what is Kant getting at with these considerations about the logicians and how they might possibly answer the question, "What is truth?" The answer leads to exactly the same view which has been that of modern semantics since Tarski. The formula given above is the same one Stegmüller uses, for example, to portray Tarski's approach.<sup>52</sup>

Nevertheless it must be observed that this approach does not claim to answer the question, "What is truth?"<sup>53</sup> It only serves the purpose of establishing a formal system involving the strict division of object- and meta-language and therefore permitting the use of the predicate "true" and yet avoiding all antinomies. So when Kant denies logicians the possibility of giving an adequate definition of truth within the framework of and with the means provided by their own science, he is only referring to those among them who believe they can do this. Only if Tarski and other modern semanticists should actually make this claim, could Kant's reproach apply to them,

50. Refer to note 30 above.

51. We are dealing here with a judgement made at a certain point in time and space on the basis of something actually perceived, and the fact expressed by this judgement.

52. W. Stegmüller, *Das Wahrheitsproblem und die Idee der Semantik* (Vienna: Springer Verlag, 1957), p. 2 and 20f.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

that is, that they are "obliged. . . to have recourse to a pitiful sophism."

What Kant means by this "sophism" (*Dialelle*) becomes clear in his *Reflection* Nr. 2143. It begins with the sentence, "My judgement should agree with the object," and is based precisely upon the considerations in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which has just been discussed. That is to say: it is to be assumed that "X is true, that is, agrees with its object, because p." Kant continues with: "I can only compare my cognition with the object, if I have <already re-cognized> it. (Ergo:) Dialelle."<sup>54</sup> With this he has revealed something which tends to be concealed by the formula in which the expression, "X is true. . ." refers to a judgement, whereas ". . . p" refers to a fact, giving the impression that a cognition or judgement is thereby actually being compared with an object immediately, with the result that the "truth" of the judgement, that is, its agreement with the object, has thus been established. In fact, however, a judgement is always necessary in order to talk about an object at all. And precisely that judgement which, because one refers to it itself and no longer to its object, would then be designated as true. The judgement contained in the expression '. . . p' would have to be true, before 'X' could be used to refer to it with the intention of *verifying* that "X is true." Analogously we could say: Socrates must himself *be* wise, in order for us to make the valid *statement*, "Socrates is wise." This concept of truth is always implied, either directly or indirectly, in all such formulae and is precisely what is intended by asking the logician the question, "What is truth?" Should he answer with such a formula, which is only a rule for employing the predicate, "true," then he is only defining truth as truth and, therefore, in fact propounding a sophism.<sup>55</sup>

This is, according to Kant, the final demonstration that there is no way to define truth adequately within the realm of formal logic, which makes it seem as if the question were altogether absurd. The task at hand therefore lies in the reconsideration of the actual meaning that can be reasonably attributed to the question. For it is, to be certain, quite meaningful to Kant, and therefore its significance must be insured. To the logician who is only concerned with particular cognitions or judgements it is so obvious from the very beginning what is meant by "judgement," "object," and their "agreement" that for him there is no meaningful basis whatever in terms of which the question, "What is truth?" could be asked. This becomes obvious when Kant states that in formal logic the nominal definition of truth must be

54. Almost exactly the same wording can be found in Kant's *Logic* (IX.50.4f).

55. This same "sophism" (*Dialelle*) appears clearly in Stegmüller's formula for representing an equivalence. A logician cannot achieve anything more than this within the framework of his science. Even Quine remarks: "A fundamental way of deciding whether a statement is true is by comparing it. . . with the world—or, which is nearest we can come, by comparing it with our experience of the world." (Methods of Logic, p. XI)

assumed as granted. Kant takes a nominal definition to mean the substitution of "other more intelligible words."<sup>56</sup> And indeed the definition of "truth," as "agreement of cognition with its object," is not only more "intelligible" to the logician. It is thought to be in itself entirely sufficient and, as such, it counts as the final and unquestionable standard for what is to be considered intelligible at all.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, should he be expected to give an answer to the question, he will have no choice other than to be caught up in a circular argument (Diallele).

But might it not be that the genuine meaning of this question could only become apparent to someone who does not deal with single cognitions, as does the logician, presupposing the meaning of cognition in general and object in general, but who, like Kant, inquires precisely about these?<sup>58</sup> It must be remembered<sup>59</sup> that Kant, too, starts with the same nominal definition of truth as his basic assumption. The difference is that he takes just the opposite strategy in his inquiry from this point on. What is thought by the logician to be quite obvious, that is, that truth is "the agreement of cognition with its object," is precisely what Kant transforms into the problem. In other words, he is asking just what it means to have cognition and a corresponding object and to say that they agree or do not agree. Precisely this is the question with which Kant abandons formal logic and opens the way to transcendental logic: What conditions must be met in order to make the existence of something possible at all which relates to something else in such a way that it could be said to be the *cognition* thereof and that this something else is its *object*?

The proposed logic is supposed to provide a framework within which the question about the nature of truth would become meaningful. It does not, however, have the meaning it might appear to have at first glance; it is not the question about truth *as opposed to falsehood*. For truth, taken in this

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56. Kant, IV.158.31; or CPR, p. 261 (= A 241, footnote).

57. The reference to Quine's remark, "a commonplace," (see note 28) is also relevant here.

58. This truly philosophical question is still being discussed today and is basically a transcendental question, even if not explicitly mentioned as such. See, for example, Günter Patzig, "Satz und Tatsache," in: *Argumentationen*, Festschrift für Josef König (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1964), translated in: *CGP*, Vol. 1, Wilhelm Kamlah, "Der moderne Wahrheitsbegriff," in: *Einsichten*, Festschrift für Gerhard Krüger (Frankfurt/M.: Klostermann 1962); Ernst Tugendhat, "Tarskis semantische Definition der Wahrheit und ihre Stellung innerhalb der Geschichte des Wahrheitsproblems im logischen Positivismus," in: *Philosophische Rundschau*, Vol. 8, 1960, and in: George Pitcher (Ed.), *Truth* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1964). But even Stegmüller, for example, comes across this question exactly at the point at which he makes the observation that there are still difficulties involved in the relationship between statements and facts. See Stegmüller, p. 140 (refer to footnote 21); further: Patzig, . 189.

59. See footnote 14.

sense, could only be stated in terms of particular cognitions, which would mean that the question would again have to be dealt with in terms of formal logic, in the light of which it can only be seen as absurd. Within transcendental logic the question, "What is truth?" would come to mean the same as the question about the nature of cognition. It would be asking what defines cognition as such. Truth, as opposed to falsehood, obviously has no relevance in this context. For cognition can be false. Truth must then have a meaning which transcends this dichotomy.

That this, in fact, is what Kant takes the question, "What is truth?" to mean, and that he treats it as such in his transcendental logic, becomes clear in the sentence in which he characterizes the essential result of this "logic of truth:" "For no cognition can contradict it (transcendental logic)<sup>60</sup> without at once losing all content, that is, all relation to any object, and therefore all truth."<sup>61</sup> This sentence alludes to a previous one, in which Kant had described in a similar form what can be achieved with the criteria of formal logic: "Whatever contradicts these rules (of formal logic) is false. For the understanding would thereby be made to contradict its own general rules of thought, and so to contradict itself."<sup>62</sup>

The allusion might seem to be superficial and accidental at first glance. Closer examination reveals, however, that it was intended by Kant, and for no other reason than to emphasize the principal difference between transcendental and formal logic. It must be considered what is being maintained in these two sentences.

It has already been shown that cognition, although false, if it is a contradiction in terms of formal logic, is not necessarily true, when consistent according to the same criteria.<sup>63</sup> But that only means that the criteria of formal logic permit no more than the identification of what is "false" or "not-false." In contrast, Kant believes transcendental logic, as the "logic of truth," to be sufficient for the identification of what is "true" or "not-true." Whatever contradicts it *loses* its status as truth and whatever satisfies it is

60. This refers especially to the "Transcendental Analytic." (See note 15) Occasionally Kant also calls formal logic a "logic of truth." The formal logic being referred to here, however, is the "Analytic" in contrast to the "Dialectic," which, in turn, is characterized as a "logic of illusion." (cf. e.g. IV.276 and IX.16) With this he points out the fact that formal logic does indeed provide us with the necessary conditions of truth, even though they are not the sufficient conditions. In contrast to this, Kant means something fundamentally different, when he calls transcendental logic a "logic of truth." This is indeed referring specifically to the "Transcendental Analytic" as opposed to the "Transcendental Dialectic," which could respectively be characterized as a "logic of illusion"—although a logic of *transcendental* illusion. This shows that the "Transcendental Analytic" is meant to be logic of a special, that is, *transcendental* truth, in which logic this truth is then explained sufficiently—in contrast to the manner in which formal logic explains its truth.

61. Kant, III.82.6f.; or CPR, p. 100 (=B 87).

62. Kant, III.80.4f.; or CPR, p. 98 (=B 84).

63. See pp. 97f.

truth. But whatever has *lost* its status as truth by *contradicting transcendental* logic cannot *gain* it back merely by *corresponding* with the criteria of *formal* logic. Thus the contrast, as it is intended by Kant, apparently maintains nothing less than that *transcendental* logic is the logic of *truth*, whereas *formal* logic is the logic of *falsehood*, inasmuch as they are supposed to give a sufficient explanation of their particular subject matter.<sup>64</sup>

It is still a matter of question, however, whether Kant really intended to portray these different kinds of logic as opposites, or even if they are opposites at all. Provided that transcendental logic is a logic of truth, whereas formal logic is logic of falsehood in the sense already mentioned, then in what sense was Kant using the word "truth?" Because he was not concerned with logical truth, as we have already seen, one might be inclined to assume that he had factual truth in mind. The unusual result of this would be that the same truth, that is, the opposite of falsehood, which is the starting-point for *formal* logic, is suddenly to be taken as the very subject of *transcendental* logic. But that would mean obscuring the line between these two types of logic as drawn by Kant in the "Introduction," in which the "Idea of a transcendental logic" is developed.

But what seems to be unusual at first glance proves to be simply out of the question, when one takes another look at the sentence with which Kant characterizes transcendental logic with respect to what it should accomplish. For according to this sentence any cognition which contradicts it would lose "all truth." But this would not be merely a strange way of restating that such cognition is false. Above all, that would mean that that very essential difference between formal and transcendental logic with which Kant is here concerned would be irretrievably lost. For in this sense whatever contradicts the criteria of *formal* logic must also lose "all truth." Therefore, assuming Kant did intend to bring out the difference between formal and transcendental logic in the "Introduction" in general, and in this sentence in particular, then it follows that he associated another meaning with the word "truth."

We can obtain a clear notion of what Kant meant by "truth" by carefully re-examining some other terms he used in connection with the expression "all truth." The sentence reads: ". . . all content, that is, all relation to any object, and therefore, all truth."<sup>65</sup> In other words, to say that cognition loses "all truth" by contradicting transcendental logic means the same as to say it loses "all relation to any object." It is important to observe here that all *relation to* an object means more than *agreement with* an object! Therefore, loss of truth cannot mean that cognition merely loses something, namely the status of truth, and is given something else, namely that of falsehood, while retaining the quality of cognition in general, as is the case in formal logic. It means,

64. And this is not at all surprising, as Kant is not, at this point, considering logical truth as it is understood in the modern sense. (See footnote 35).

65. Kant, III.82.7f.; or CPR, p. 100 (= B 87).

rather, that it ceases to be cognition at all, beyond the consideration of whether it is true or false. For, as transcendental logic demonstrates, cognition is nothing other than the relation of something to an object, which, if it is in fact present, can then be either true or false, that is, in agreement with its object or not, but which, in order to exist at all must satisfy certain conditions which transcendental logic is supposed to establish.

It is therefore obvious that in this sentence Kant is using the word "truth" in a very special sense, which cannot be understood to mean "truth" as opposed to "falsehood." The expression "all truth" is primarily<sup>66</sup> nothing other than an abbreviated form of "all possibility of truth," which, as such, is the "possibility of falsehood," as well. Accordingly, "all truth" means the same as "the characteristic of having truth value (*Wahrheitsdifferenz*),"<sup>x</sup> although Kant himself did not use this expression.

This distinction is, at the same time, fundamental enough to establish the real difference between formal and transcendental logic, as was Kant's intention in the "Introduction." It must be remembered that the other sentence to which this one refers had stated that any cognition which contradicts the criteria of formal logic is false. The second sentence, however, maintains nothing other than the following contrary statement: Whatever contradicts the criteria of *formal logic*, even if not true or in agreement with itself, is *nonetheless false*, which means it at least has some truth value. Whereas anything that contradicts *transcendental logic* is *not even false*, because it has not truth value; that is, there is no *possibility* of evaluating such statements as either true or false.

Transcendental logic, as the "logic of truth," is therefore the logic of determining what can be evaluated as true or false at all. Whatever contradicts its rules loses "all truth," that is, not only that truth which, as the opposite of falsehood, makes up the subject matter of formal logic, but rather the other "truth," as well, which transcends the entire difference between true and false by being the very condition for such a distinction.<sup>67</sup> Although Kant does not call this concept "*Wahrheitsdifferenz*" (the characteristic of having truth value), he nonetheless has a special expression which portrays this special meaning of truth. In contrast to that other truth,

66. That is, if "all" is first taken in its vaguer sense.

67. This more precise meaning of "all" is no doubt meant here. It can be explained by considering that Kant often uses the expression "all" synonymously with "every." In this case it would have the meaning of "every kind of. . ." (See also: III.270.31; III.337.32; III.387.21; or CPR, pp. 371,438,490 (= B 412-3, 517, 603); further: V.48.18 and Reflections 3977, 3935.3936). Of course, transcendental logic is not only called the "logic of truth" because it deals with truth-value. Above all, it bears this title because it contains principles which are *true a priori* and, as such, make truth-value possible. However, this is not a matter which is dealt with in the "Introduction," but rather which will come up later. Cf., however, for example, Kant, III.203.

which he describes as "empirical," he refers to the subject matter of transcendental logic as "transcendental truth."<sup>68</sup>

And that is precisely what is actually being and always has been asked—even though only implicitly prior to Kant—by the question "What is truth?" if ever the question is to have any meaning at all, that is, if it is to be answerable.<sup>69</sup>

But the question can only be understood to have this meaning, when seen from the very beginning as a transcendental question, which therefore demands a transcendental answer. Kant was the first to have been favored with this insight, but that in turn meant that he was burdened with the task of first laying the very foundation for such a transcendental logic in order to carry it out, a task for which the most strenuous of all conceptual thought is necessary.<sup>70</sup>

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68. Compare III.139.7-10 with III.145.21-25; III.203.14-19; III.337.31ff.; or CPR, p. 186 with pp. 194,258,438 (= B 185 with B 196-7,296,517). This also explains the sense in which transcendental truth and transcendental illusion are opposites. All judgements are transcendental illusions, if they do not possess transcendental truth, but as *judgements* nonetheless *give this appearance*. Without this truth, that is, without actual relation to an object, such judgements can only seem to be true or false. Actually they are neither the one nor the other, but rather simply meaningless, for which Kant uses the expression "groundless." See: III.82.29 and 141.16-25; or CPR, p. 189-90 (= B 88). Furthermore, that explains why transcendental truth means two things for Kant, one being the truth-value of empirical judgements and the other being the transcendental truth of principles. See also: III.139.7-10; or CPR, p. 186 (= B 185). The distinction of true and false is possible in empirical judgements only if they are grounded in the truth a priori of the principles on which they are based.

69. To what extent it is possible with *transcendental logic* to determine what truth could mean in the sense of an opposite to falseness remains unanswered in the "Introduction" to the "Transcendental Logic." See also: III.432.4-9; or CPR, p. 538 (= B 679). Cf. G. Prauss, *Einführung in die Erkenntnistheorie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1979), p. 146-216.

70. This can now also be compared with the attempt at a systematic reconstruction of Kant's transcendental philosophy, which can be found in my two treatises: *Erscheinung bei Kant* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1971) and *Kant und das Problem der Dinge an sich* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1974 and 1977).

## Translation Notes

i The passage referred to is B 74-88; or CPR, pp. 92-101.

ii The key word, "here," which Prauss will refer to in the following sentence, has been left out of the Kemp Smith translation.

iii The word, "one," refers to the implied agent of the passive sentence as it is translated by Kemp Smith ("were supposed to be driven into a corner," p. 97). The German equivalent to "one" is "man" and does appear in the original, which is given in the active mode: "womit *man* die Logiker in die Enge zu treiben vermeinte."

iv The clause in German reads: ". . . wenn die Frage an sich *ungereimt ist*. . ."

v Recalling the Kemp Smith translation we find: "if *a* question is absurd in itself." The ambiguity which Prauss is talking about could be seen as resolved by the translator's decision to change the definite article into an indefinite article.

vi The italics are added by Prauss.

vii I have chosen as an exception to give a more literal translation of this citation. The reading in the Kemp Smith translation is: ". . . cannot take account of the [varying] content of knowledge (relation to its [specific] object)." (p. 97)

viii Kemp Smith translates Kant's use of the word, "Diallele," with "sophism." "Diallele" can originally be rendered as a circular argument. That would give the present context, as well as the original passage, a sense which could be rephrased as: "Whenever a logician addresses himself to the question, What is truth?" his answer will necessarily have the form of a circular argument. However, see Prauss's footnote 48.

ix This word (in German: "Nachteil") was omitted in the Kemp Smith translation.

x To be "*wahrheitsdifferent*" means to be either true or false, that is, to have a truth-value in Frege's sense. So "*wahrheitsdifferent*" or "*Wahrheitsdifferenz*" would mean something like "truth evaluable" and "truth-evaluability," respectively, if they are translatable at all. Prauss pointed out to me that the origin of these terms is based on a double negative: *not indifferent*, that is, to truth. Taking away the negatives leaves: "different" to truth, or "truth-different" (*wahrheitsdifferent*). Unfortunately, "different" cannot serve as the opposite of "indifferent" in English, as it can in German. According to Prauss, something (any combination of words) is indifferent to truth (*wahrheitsindifferent*), if it cannot be given a truth-value at all, and something (an intelligible statement) is "different" to truth, if it can be said to be either true or false.



# HUSSERL'S PRINCIPLE OF EVIDENZ THE SIGNIFICANCE AND LIMITATIONS OF A METHODOLOGICAL NORM OF PHENOMENOLOGY AS A SCIENCE\*

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Translated by Robert Pettit

In *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl states a *first methodological principle* of his phenomenology in the following way: "It is apparent that, as a consequence of the fact that I am striving after the presumptive goal of true science, I cannot as a beginner in philosophy make any judgment or accept one which I have not drawn from evidence, from 'experiences' in which the respective things and states of affairs are present to me as 'they themselves.'" This principle of evidence is characterized by Husserl here as a "consistently applicable normative" principle of the phenomenological

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\* Translated from "Husserls Evidenzprinzip. Sinn und Grenzen einer methodischen Norm der Phänomenologie als Wissenschaft," *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 32,1 (1978): 3-30. The translator wishes especially to thank Professor Dallas Willard for reading the translation and offering constructive suggestions as well as for tracking down the references in the English translations.

In this essay, the concept of evidence, as a key concept of Husserl's, is critically examined. Since it has been frequently misinterpreted, as though Husserl were asserting with "evidence" something like the immediate intuition of truth, particular importance is placed here on the fact that Husserl's concept of evidence is a methodological one. For "evidence" designates here a particular process of synthesis, whereby empty intentions are brought into congruence with fulfilling intuitions. Since in this process every type of object corresponds to its own mode of fulfillment, specific problems develop for evidence according to the respective area of knowledge, difficulties that are examined here also in relation to the evidences of transcendental phenomenology itself.

method (I, 54; or CM, 13-14).<sup>1</sup> Similar formulations can be found frequently in the work done by Husserl during the 1920s, the period in which he struggled with the problem of a final justification of phenomenology in successive new attempts. This principle, however, had from the very beginning more or less implicitly determined Husserl's work, and from there it gains its significance for the entirety of his philosophy.

Husserl's principle of evidence can be understood in particular as a sharper and more precise formulation of the 'principle of all principles' in *Ideas I*, which states "that every originally given intuition (*Anschauung*) is a justifying source of knowledge, that everything which is presented to us in the 'intuition' originally, that is, so to speak, in its "bodily" (*leibhaft*) presence, should be simply accepted as what it presents itself to be, but only in the limits in which it there presents itself" (III, 52; or ID, 92).

It is not my purpose here to analyze the circumstances that are responsible for the fact that nowhere in the secondary literature, and especially nowhere in the criticism of Husserl concerning the problem of evidence, are the later and more precise versions of the principle here in question taken into consideration. An appropriate discussion of Husserl's conception of evidence, however, can only take place within the context of these later versions. Nor will I be able to discuss whether the criticism is often mistaken in orienting

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1. [As pertaining to German sources] references in the text refer to the volume (in roman numerals) and page number of the *Husserliana* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff). Interspacing in the Husserliana text is rendered here in normal print with quotation marks where this corresponds to the relevant original manuscripts of Husserl's. For quotations from Husserl's *Logical Investigations* from the year 1901, which have not yet appeared in the complete works, page references following LU II, 1 and LU II, 2 (LU = *Logische Untersuchungen*) are made to the second, revised edition (Halle a.S.: Max Niemeyer, 1913), which is readily available.

[Following the citing of a source in German, the intent has been to cite the English translation, where such exists, using the following abbreviations.

CM = *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. D. Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960).

ID = *Ideas: General Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1931).

LI = *Logical Investigations*, trans. J. N. Findlay (New York: Humanities Press, 1970).

IP = *The Idea of Phenomenology*, trans. W. P. Alston and G. Nakhnikian (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964).

PP = *Phenomenological Psychology*, trans. J. Scanlon (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977).

CE = *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. D. Carr (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1970).

FT = *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, trans. D. Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969).

EJ = *Experience and Judgement*, trans. J. Churchill and K. Ameriks (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1973).]

itself according to the principle of the *Ideas I* of 1913, which is frequently quoted and could certainly be the cause of considerable misunderstanding, at least for someone who was not otherwise bothered by the 'limits' of which Husserl already there speaks. Furthermore, Husserl's reference to intuition, made so very often in this very work of 1913, could very well have helped to increase the lack of understanding. Consequently, the impression may have been created that here in the name of an 'intuition of essences' (*Wesensschau*), of which Husserl so often speaks in the *Ideas I*, a form of intuitionism was being suggested whose only legitimizing instance appears to be evidence, designated as 'experience of truth,' or sometimes even as its 'internalization'—which can only be attributed to especially favored individuals capable of genuine seeing. So interpreted, such an intuitionism could hardly be considered critical enough to maintain any serious claim of being a scientific form of philosophy.

What Husserl postulates is exactly the opposite: a philosophy that has true science as its goal must have as its norm the principle of evidence. This requirement, however, does not merely mean that philosophy cannot do without evidence, as though the only possibility for philosophy to prove its insights is by referring to the evidence which would ultimately end every regressive chain of arguments. Much more, Husserl strictly demands that philosophical knowledge which deserves the name 'scientific' is only possible through the acquisition of evident conceptual insight. The normative character of evidence requires precisely that it absolutely determine the search for philosophical knowledge. Then and only then, when what is intended as knowledge meets the demands of evidence, does it fulfill the norm of science.

This may sound strange even to philosophically trained ears. Suspicion may arise: Wasn't it Husserl, the former mathematician, who, fascinated by the rigor of deductive science, attempted to establish it phenomenologically in the *Logical Investigations* only to later give up the ideal of proof of scientific knowledge for the sake of philosophy? Wasn't it Husserl, distressed more than other thinkers by the traditional lack of proof in philosophy, who sought to provide it instead with its own unique method with which it could (it was hoped) achieve proper forms of justification and an adequate basis for its assertions? Husserl no longer demanded from philosophy constructions and deductions, but rather, specific analytical methods of procedure; 'exhibit,' 'demonstrate,' and 'uncover' were the key words of the new method. A new method was required, which still had to be worked out, of seeing, of 'noein' in the widest sense of the word. Carried to perfection, this disciplining of the ability to 'look at' something can, of course, then find complete satisfaction only in evident conceptual insight.

With what right, though, can philosophy established in such a manner call itself scientific? Actually, two questions are being asked here. One is about the nature and justification of Husserl's concept of philosophy and

science; the other question is about evidence, which is unmistakably the focal point of Husserl's philosophy. What exactly should be understood by evidence, what does it achieve, and what secures it the status of a first methodological principle of phenomenological philosophy?

The close connection between both questions does not prohibit one, however, from separating their discussion. The historically prior concept is that of evidence. Its methodological function is already manifest in the *Logical Investigations* which are not yet determined by any clear concept of philosophy. Also, to the extent that Husserl clarifies the goal of phenomenology and deepens his understanding of it in his later works, he more precisely explicates, differentiates, and critically reflects on the concept of evidence as well. In the first part of the following examination, we intend to further inquire into this concept. Starting with what were frequently mere hints, we are going to attempt the beginning of a phenomenological analysis of evidence, taking into account at the same time Husserl's methodological intentions as well. Indeed, phenomenology's reflexivity upon itself surely demands that the clarification and critical examination of its own methods of procedure be carried out with phenomenological means.

## I

The concept of evidence is used as a term by Husserl in connection with the concept of 'rigorous' knowing or knowledge as opposed to unfounded opinion. As early as 1900, Husserl wrote in paragraph six of the 'Prolegomena' that "in the final analysis" all true knowledge and in particular all scientific knowledge "rests on evidence" (XVIII, 29; or LI, 61).

This is not contradicted by the fact that for Husserl, as well, science is not merely knowledge as such, but depends essentially on the systematic context of proof for knowledge. We find, therefore, right at the beginning of his undertaking this statement of rejection: "The evidence on which all knowledge finally rests is not a natural gift that . . . appears without any methodical technical arrangement" (XVIII, 31; or LI, 63). What Husserl had in mind with these arrangements were the methods of procedure in the sciences. The necessity of proceeding systematically in the proving of their assertions is seen in the fact that, in a science that seeks to go beyond what is "immediately evident and therefore trivial," evidence can only be indirectly obtained by way of proof (XVIII, 32, 166; or LI, 63, 178f.).

The scientist, however, does not speak about evidence, but about the truth or falsity of his propositions in accordance with a critical examination of them relative to existing states of affairs. This might lead one to believe that the evidence of which Husserl is here speaking, whether direct or indirect, is merely a subjective appearance accompanying scientific demonstration which originates in the conviction that the judgment is correct. This 'certainty,' which may be something like an 'announcement' of

objective truth in consciousness, does not guarantee, however, that because of such an 'experience of truth,' the truth will always be secured.

But if evidence does not offer any guarantee for truth, then the question arises of whether it makes sense to ascribe any role at all to it in the acquisition of knowledge. Or did Husserl maintain the position after all that evidence can at least be regarded as a sufficient condition for the discovery of truth? Doesn't the important role that evidence plays in his phenomenology rest on the insight that truth can be *derived* from the *experiences* of evidence? Apparently, the opinion is still held today that Husserl, after having traced evidence back to truth in the *Logical Investigations*, later maintained an 'Evidence-theory of truth' in his transcendental phenomenology whereby evidence advanced to a criterion of truth.<sup>2</sup>

Such interpretations suffer mainly from the fact that they fail to recognize the specific sense in which Husserl has raised the question of truth and evidence. Generally, they have also been furthered by the fact that it was considered possible to begin uncritically with an ordinary concept of truth, especially that of propositions, as well as a phenomenologically vague concept of evidence, sometimes even in the sense of Descartes's *clara et distincta perceptio*, without asking what these concepts actually mean for Husserl. To be sure, it is not his intention to define these concepts, but rather to explain them phenomenologically. Or more precisely, Husserl is concerned with the phenomenological clarification of the *sense* of evidence and truth. The specific peculiarity of phenomenological analysis implies, though, that such a clarification of sense can only be achieved *through recourse to the modes of givenness* of evidence and truth. How do they come before us in cognitive consciousness? With this question, the systematic starting point is given for a phenomenological investigation of evidence.<sup>3</sup>

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2. So, for example, G. Patzig, "Kritische Bemerkungen zur Husserls Thesen über das Verhältnis von Wahrheit und Evidenz," *Neue Hefte für Philosophie*, Heft 1 (1971), pp. 12–32. [Reprinted as "Husserl on Truth and Evidence," in *Readings on Edmund Husserl's Logical Investigations*, ed. J. N. Mohanty (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977), pp. 179–96. References are made to both the original German text and the English translation.] The author, however, relies primarily on certain passages of the LU that do not sufficiently reflect the sixth Logical Investigation, which is very important for our purposes here. The fact that with regard to Husserl one cannot speak of a "relation of identity" between truth and evidence or of an attempt "to reduce truth to evidence" (Patzig, "Kritische Bemerkungen," p. 12; Mohanty, "Husserl on Truth," p. 179) is obvious not merely in regard to his later works, but as early as the sixth Logical Investigation in which Husserl first takes up the question of evidence systematically. Compare E. Tugendhat, *Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1970), p. 101.

3. Evidence, which in a first approximation is characterized phenomenologically as a particular mode of givenness of something objective, must therefore itself be subject to questioning about its mode of givenness in the reflective consciousness in which it becomes intentional objectivity, if a phenomenological

I will begin with Husserl's frequently used, and most often misunderstood, expression of evidence as the '*experience*' of truth (XVIII, 193; or LI, 194 f.; LU II, 2, 122; or LI, 668-9, 766). Accordingly, evidence presents itself as belonging to the act-side of consciousness. Evidence, it appears, is a particular act-quality that has, as every other act-quality does, its specific *noetical* characteristics. A closer examination shows, however, that such an interpretation would be incorrect. *Experiences* of evidence are not a special kind or class of intentions. The '*experience*' designated as evidence does not have its own characteristic object, which belongs to it structurally, as do the *experiences* in a phenomenologically full sense such as perception, representation, memory, or judgment, which have their specific type of objectivity. On the contrary, the objectivity correlated to the *experiences* of evidence is nothing other than something that is respectively perceived, remembered, represented, and judged. Something that is 'evident as such' would make no sense, unless, of course, one were talking about something that is evidently perceived, evidently represented, evidently judged and so forth. But doesn't this particular evidently given thing then represent exactly that truth which is supposed to be experienced in evidence? Obviously, Husserl had conceived of at least one concept of truth, among others, in a sense that enabled him to speak meaningfully about it as something *objective* which corresponds to the *act* of evidence (LU II, 2, 122ff.; or LI, 668-9, 766ff.).

At the same time it would be misleading, if, in accordance with this, one wanted to grant to the *experiences* of evidence a special intentional status, as though consciousness was 'directed toward' something in these *experiences*, namely toward truth. On the contrary, evidence cannot be conceived of phenomenologically except as a distinctive *mode* of intentionality through which the intended object as such is *not at all determined*, but only *more closely qualified*.

It should be remembered that from the beginning, *one* essentially new aspect of Husserl's phenomenology was a conception of objectivity relative to *modes of consciousness*. It is a significant insight of Husserl's that phenomenology must be concerned not merely with the intentional correlation between the act of consciousness and the object, but essentially and above all with objects in the *manner* of their givenness and with the relevant modes of consciousness. Only then will phenomenology be able to deal at all with the problem of evidence. For evidence can be comprehended only as one such mode of consciousness—that is, as a phenomenologically distinc-

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analysis of evidence is to be possible. Husserl, who does not want to speak of an "evidence theory" (XVII, 167; or FT, 158 f.), saw the necessity of differentiating between evident givenness and givenness of evidence, though he appears to have considered the problem solely in terms of 'levels' of evidence which as such, can in principle be endlessly reiterated (XVII, 167; or FT, 158 f.). However, even they are subject later to his self-critical verdict against a 'transcendentally naive' phenomenology. More concerning this on pp. 135ff.

tive one—and, apart from consideration of Husserl's pertinent differentiations, remains inexplicable.

On the other hand, Husserl also speaks of objectivity as being evident or as requiring to be brought to evidence. It is no mere chance inaccuracy, however, when the predicate 'evident' is used both noetically and noematically. For it is precisely in the modes of givenness that the thorough-going correlation of noesis and noema is to be seen, so that the phenomenological analysis, insofar as it concentrates on one aspect, has to be constantly aware of the other. Thus it is only variations in accentuations or "thematizations," as Husserl says, that allow a distinction between noetic and noematic investigation. This means that evidence, in accordance with its modal character, can then be judged an *experience* when the objectivity corresponding to it can be qualified as evident without any inadmissible equivocations. For evidence can by no means be inherently attributed to the objectivity in question, as though it were an adherent or intrinsic quality, but it must be expressly *brought to it*. In Husserl's phenomenology, the establishment of evidences is as much a painstaking as it is a sober process that has absolutely nothing to do with any kind of vision with a mysterious gaze. Rather, it turns out to be an eminent *achievement* of consciousness which requires a considerable amount of activity.

This is not only true for Husserl's later theory of constitution, but is also apparent in the analytical-descriptive phenomenology of the *Logical Investigations*, where what is merely given is never by virtue of this fact alone evidently given and, as such, simply has to be taken and grasped. What then is necessary to bring something given to a mode of evident givenness? This raises the question of what, then, phenomenologically characterizes and distinguishes that which is grasped with evidence.

To begin with, the modes of givenness of something objective characterize the manner of its being given and determine, according to Husserl, its 'sense' as something objective. In these modes of givenness the object is comprehended 'as' something (LU II, 1; 400, 413ff.; or LI, 578, 587ff.; III, 321f or ID, 366f). Further differentiation of the modes of givenness leads to distinctions of modality which likewise qualify this sense. Belonging to the modes of givenness on the other hand are the modalities of being such as 'certainly existing,' 'doubtfully existing,' 'probably existing,' and others, all of which correspond to doxic characteristics on the noetic side (III, 256ff.; or ID, 297 ff.). Of special importance among the modalities of being, because it requires *justification*, is the modality of *truly existing*, which in the simple doxa was first intended merely as existing. Only by proving the legitimacy of the doxic pretension does the intention take on the character of *knowledge* (III, 333ff.; or ID, 379 ff.).

Further, belonging to the modes of givenness—even in the full sense (III, 323; or ID, 368)—are those modalities in which something given appears in varying degrees of presence, that is, 'proximate givenness' or 'remote given-

ness'; Husserl describes them as modes of intuitive fullness (LU, 2; 75ff.; or LI, 728ff.; III, 155ff., 323ff.; or ID, 193ff., 368ff.). Here again, one of the modalities has the distinction of bringing the respective objectivity to *self-givenness*. In a case where we at first merely intend something as truly existing, self-givenness provides this 'empty' pretension with the necessary fullness which reveals the intended object as really existing, as truly existing—that is, makes it present precisely as it itself.<sup>4</sup>

The distinction between empty intention or merely signitive intention and 'intuitive' fulfillment (*Erfüllung*) is one of the most essential aspects of Husserl's phenomenology. It is of decisive importance for the understanding of Husserl's conception of evidence. For *evidence* is in the final analysis nothing other than the *experience* of the self-givenness of something. It is that *act of self-giving* in which the objectivity in question constitutes itself in the modality of 'intuitive' fullness.<sup>5</sup> If evidence is also the *experience* of truth, then truth must be understood here as self-givenness, that is, as the objective correlate of the act of self-giving. Husserl's concept of self-givenness proves, in fact, to be indispensable for an understanding of his concept of evidence as well as his fundamental concept of truth.

That the *experience* of evidence does not by any means have the character of 'simple' intention becomes apparent not only because of Husserl's repeated rejections of 'feelings of evidence' and 'presentations of evidence.' More importantly, evidence can only be established in such complexities of acts expounded by Husserl as acts of synthesis. Among the many forms of

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4. The difference between empty and fulfilling intentions can already be found in the 'Philosophy of Arithmetic,' where Husserl, in connection with similar, yet divergent distinctions drawn by Brentano, characterized the symbolic or figurative representation—which does not render its content directly, but indirectly, through symbols—thereby paving the way for the fundamental distinction made in the *Logical Investigations* between merely signitive—because it is generally dependent on signs—intention and 'intuitive' fulfillment and further developed it in his later works (XII, 193 ff.).
5. Regarding Husserl's usage of the 'thing itself,' Tugendhat has correctly pointed out that it is not meant in comparison to another object, but "in contrast to deficient modes of givenness of the same thing." Consequently, the thing 'itself' can only be understood in terms of the difference in the *modes of givenness*. This means that even an empty intention already intends the thing *itself* and not another thing. However, the thing *itself* is not yet *given* in it (Tugendhat, *Der Wahrheitsbegriff*, pp. 58, 78). Self-givenness should not, however, as Tugendhat's interpretation on page 78 seems to suggest, be identified with original givenness or givenness "in person" (III, 157; or ID, 194), since it is in general the objective correlate of a certain type of fulfilling synthesis, the specific achievements of which go far beyond the realm of sense perception. Also, Husserl repeatedly stresses that 'given' and 'self-given' are one and the same thing and that the 'profuse expression' only serves to exclude the vague generality of the concept of givenness (III, 157; or ID, 194f.; compare XII, 165ff.).

synthesis Husserl examines in his phenomenology, the synthesis of evidence is again one of a kind. As a *synthesis of coincidence* of empty intention and fulfillment it is, in regard to its noematic result, a *synthesis of identification* of something that was at first merely intended signitively with what it is according to itself. And this something becomes present as *itself* only through such syntheses of fulfillment. Something objective that is 'merely thought' in a signitive act, for example, in the 'unauthentic speech' of intention remote from the thing itself, obtains its material fullness and presence through the fulfilling intuition.<sup>6</sup>

It may be doubted whether it was advisable for Husserl to characterize all fulfilling intentions as 'intuition.' The careful way in which he carries over this concept into the categorial realm in the sixth Logical Investigation does make the usage of the concept of 'categorial intuition' seem plausible for the problems dealt with there, but it leaves a number of questions unresolved to which we will later attend. It should be noted, however, that Husserl does not use the concept of intuition in its traditional role as the opposite of the concept of thought, as though both acts were correlated to different objectivities. Instead, intuition here constantly has the function of fulfillment for signitive intentions insofar as it brings what is meant to givenness as itself, and in a strict sense thereby 'gives' it for the first time (LU II, 2; or LI, 832f.). That is precisely the source of the peculiar difficulty of a general phenomenological characterization and analysis of intuition as Husserl understands it: What the intuition of a thing should be, cannot be characterized once and for all and, as it were, in relation to itself, but can only be determined in recourse to the respective corresponding signitive intentions.

Every type of object also corresponds only to a certain mode of fulfillment that is inherent to it and cannot be arbitrarily modified. Concerning evidence, this means that it is subject to varying norms of perfection depending upon what 'kind' and 'style' of evidence it is. Furthermore, even for a particular type of object it is true that the perfect (adequate) evidence just demanded cannot be actually achieved in every intuitive fulfillment. Rather, every *kind* of evidence also has varying *grades* and *levels* of approximation to the object. These are not, however, determined by the thing, but mark stages on the way to achieving evidence which has to be brought forth by consciousness in knowing. The fact that fulfillment of intention is in principle capable of being increased and that clarity and fullness of givenness can be of different grades is one of the most important insights Husserl had, which first enables him to conceive of the concept of evidence as a

6. It is not necessary here to consider the fact that not every synthesis of identification is a synthesis of fulfillment (LU II, 2; 51; or LI, 709).

An especially good description of a synthesis of coincidence is given by Husserl in regard to the dynamic unity between meaning-intention (mere literal meaning) and expressed intuition (LU II, 2; 32ff.; or LI 694ff.).

*methodological concept.*<sup>7</sup> Evidence is thus not simply the lucid certainty of an intuited truth, rather, it becomes the methodological norm for all intentions that pretend to attain to knowledge. These intentions are to be fulfilled in such a way that what is signitively meant and its intuitive fulfillment coincide. Only a thing that constitutes 'itself' in a synthesis of identification between an empty intention and a fulfilling intuition can, according to Husserl, be *known* in a strict sense.

This rigorous concept of knowledge, however, marks only the final goal for possible increases in fulfillment. The different gradations of fulfillment, in which a given thing has been more or less "confirmed" but cannot be regarded as 'true' in a strict sense, all fall under the ideal of adequateness, that is, the complete agreement of what is meant with the thing 'itself' whereby no partial intention remains unfulfilled. In the sense of a critique of knowledge, this ideal goal of the perfect synthesis of fulfillment is what Husserl means by evidence. It would thus give to intention "the absolute fullness of content and that is of the object itself"; its objective correlate would be "*being in the sense of truth or else truth.*"

This concept of truth is only one of several that Husserl pursues in subtle analyses.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, it is the most important and fundamental phenomenologically. For this reason, the principle of evidence is of such decisive methodological significance for phenomenology as a science. Insofar as it ascribes truth not to the proposition, but to the given objectivity, the concept of truth we are here considering differs essentially from the usual concept of truth in the sense of the old theory of adequation, which defines the truth of propositions, a more precise form of which today dominates the discussion of truth in the analytic theory of science. As Husserl understands it, 'true' is not a predicate of judgment, but a predicate of the state of affairs.<sup>9</sup> Husserl thus returns to an original understanding of truth which he

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7. As early as 1901, Husserl dealt with "series of increases in fulfillment" in a special paragraph of the sixth Logical Investigation and distinguished gradations of fullness regarding richness, completeness, and liveliness (LU II, 2; 83ff; or LI, 734 ff.). Compare also III, 156, 309; or ID 94, 351; XVII, 73, 180, 287, 293; or FT, 68 f., 119 f., 281, 287; XI, 431. Patzig's contention ("Kritische Bemerkungen," p. 12; 179) that if Husserl contests any view, then this is the view that evidence could be a matter of degree, is, in consideration of the role that the gradation of evidence played for him from the beginning, unintelligible and lacks a textual basis. The fact that "a connection which almost identifies evidence with truth" (*ibid.*) does not permit the gradation of evidence, because a proposition is either true or false, is undeniably true; it has, however, nothing whatsoever to do with Husserl's concept of evidence. This concept is characterized precisely by the fact that it not only allows increases in the syntheses of fulfillment, but actually demands them.

8. See LU II, 2; 122ff.; or LI, 765ff.

9. Truth in this first sense is, according to Husserl, something "objective" which "corresponds to the act of evidence" (LU II, 2; 129; or LI 165f.).

renders precise phenomenologically with the help of the concept of evidence. For, when we ask if it is true that . . . , we are generally not referring to the truth of the proposition or its correctness, to use Husserl's terminology. Instead, we would like to assure ourselves of the existence of the asserted state of affairs. Only when the state of affairs exists, is 'given,' can the sentence asserting it be true in the sense of the concept of truth for propositions. Tarski states nothing other than this in his definition of truth: namely, that ' $p$ ' is true if and only if it is the case that  $p$ .

E. Tugendhat has pointed out that the concept of truth for propositions involves an unclarified concept of agreement between proposition and state of affairs which in Tarski's exact, but trivial definition is not avoided, but has merely been made implicit. Tugendhat sees the methodological significance of Husserl's phenomenological concept of truth precisely in the fact that is neither vague nor logically trivial and sufficiently flexible to allow for augmentations for which the speaking of truth "can be examined step by step with respect to its meaning."<sup>10</sup> Husserl's doctrine of evidence involves precisely such investigations into the sense of an assertion. What determines the search for evidence, the working out of the self-givenness, is in the final analysis nothing other than the phenomenological clarification and exact explication of 'what is the case,' 'correctness,' 'agreement'—not of a proposition, but of a state of affairs, the sense of which is always uncritically presupposed in the definitions of the truth of propositions.

It should be obvious now that with its demand for evidence phenomenology is not suggesting ways of discovering truth other than those already used by either the exact sciences or any other intellectual endeavor, nor does it want to replace or even supplement their standards for the examination of proposed truths with a criterion of truth. To expect it to assume such a role would, according to Husserl, make evidence "itself a miracle, really an absurdity" (XVII, 165; or FT, 157). Only in light of the purpose of Husserl's clarification of evidence does the assertion that all scientific understanding should finally rest on evidence gain intelligibility. It does not mean that the proof sequences of scientific propositions have to be pursued until the final question "why" is answered by an evident insight that does not require any further proof. Nor does it mean that there are 'evident' insights behind the final or first principles of a science, for example, its axiomatic assumptions, so that these principles do not, therefore, require any further justification. As Husserl repeatedly emphasized, phenomenology should not and does not want to compete with the methods and results of science. What it does want is a phenomenological and analytical understanding of the *sense* of statements about 'being,' 'being given,' 'being true,' and also being 'evident,' which is active everywhere in scientific propositions without, however, being fully developed and explicated.

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10. Tugendhat, *Der Wahrheitsbegriff*, p. 3, also p. 85.

## II

With these kinds of questions being raised, however, phenomenology is confronted with the problem of how it can find access to its own area of investigation. If it is not the domain of existing objects, but that of the 'consciousness of' them, so that they are only to be taken as intentional correlates of consciousness, then whatever determinations may be ascribed to them cannot be explained phenomenologically except by reflective analysis of the noetic and noematic structures of intentional consciousness. It is by virtue of the fundamental characteristic of intentional consciousness, namely synthesis, that objectivity constitutes itself in consciousness. All that is transcendent to consciousness thus becomes a transcendent 'in' consciousness; being of whatever kind becomes phenomenologically a 'claim to being' which has to be clarified. This claim to being is within a consciousness, however, which intentionally comprises all transcends in itself, and thus is transcendental consciousness. Whatever 'being,' 'being truthful' and 'being real' may mean, must be shown within transcendental consciousness alone, because it would be nonsensical to assume something that lay beyond it.

It is this task of a transcendental-immanent clarification of the sense of the positings of being, insofar as they are phenomena of consciousness, which even has to identify what in the natural attitude is proposed beyond its merely phenomenon being, and which assigns to Husserl's principle of evidence the function of a primary methodological principle of phenomenology. Whatever is meant by 'being' in all its modifications from a non-phenomenological point of view, must be capable of being exhibited from a phenomenological one—at least ideally—as an identifiable unity that constitutes itself in various syntheses of authenticating fulfillment of an object meant.

It was precisely in regard to the transcendental-phenomenological investigation of the problem of constitution that Husserl raised the claim to scientific philosophy. He regarded philosophy, "according to its idea, as the universal and in the radical sense rigorous science. As such, it is the science of the most basic foundations or, what is equally true, of final responsibility" (V, 139; VII, 204). Husserl stressed repeatedly that with this interpretation of the concept of philosophy he was restoring the original idea that had formed the basis of European philosophy and science since Plato (V, 139; VI, 508ff.; or CE, 389ff.; VII, 7f.; XVII, 1ff.; or FT, 1ff.). Husserl sees this idea perpetuated in the sciences as they have factually developed, however, so that it cannot be regained through comparative abstraction, but only "through preoccupation with the claim" they still "carry with them despite what they are in actuality" (I, 50; or CM, 9).

The claim Husserl is referring to is the aim of science to establish the truth, a claim that originates in a theoretical interest free from all other purposes (VII, 203; VIII, 103). This "interest in the truth purely for the sake of

truth" encompasses all endeavors to establish proof and justification. But because they refer 'directly' to what is given and cannot, because of their method, question its givenness, the exact sciences cannot possibly establish final proof through reflection. Thus only philosophy can and should, according to Husserl, be a science of absolute foundations and justification which by radically pursuing the question of final grounds makes good its claim to supreme rationality and must be, therefore, at the same time universal (I, 52, 179; or CM, 11f., 153; VIII, 3). Because such an absolutely justifying science can only be achieved by reflecting in principle on the sense of truth, philosophy as a rigorous science is only possible as phenomenology (II, 20 ff.; or IP, 15-16; I, 179; or CM, 153).<sup>11</sup>

Husserl's concept of philosophy raises two questions: What exactly does Husserl understand by the final or absolute foundation which phenomenology as a science is supposed to achieve on the basis of the methodological principle of evidence? Furthermore, how can Husserl's phenomenology, because of its claim to an absolute foundation—as opposed to other attempts to achieve a final foundation—possibly avoid the objection that it will necessarily end up as an uncritical dogmatism? Given such a foundation, wouldn't phenomenology obviously have to concede the possibility of being stopped short in the process of justification, which would also mean a restriction in its claim to final responsibility in the sense that Husserl understood it? The discussion of these questions should provide us at the same time with information for judging the accomplishment and limitation of Husserl's principle of evidence.

The fact that Husserl considered phenomenology as a universal and absolutely rational science does not mean that its final justification has already been achieved in Husserl's own works. On the contrary, if we conceive of it as pursuing the purposes already mentioned, then phenomenology is "a goal lying in the infinite future" (VIII, 196) or "an idea which can only be realized in terms of relative, temporary validity and in an unending historical process, but as such can actually be achieved" (V, 139). If, according to this, the gradual realization of this idea is possible and can be accomplished on the basis of the phenomenological method, then a special demand is made on the phenomenological principle of evidence.

Up until now we have considered evidence only insofar as we were concerned with clarifying its concept phenomenologically. For that purpose, it was not necessary to further qualify such concepts as givenness and self-givenness. Husserl's claim for philosophy, however, involves more than just

11. Concerning Husserl's concept of philosophy, compare T. Seeböhm, *Die Bedingungen der Möglichkeit der Transzentalphilosophie* (Bonn: H. Bouvier and Co. Verlag, 1962), especially pp. 39 ff. Further, L. Landgrebe, *Der Weg der Phänomenologie. Das Problem einer ursprünglichen Erfahrung* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1963), as well as Tugendhat, *Der Wahrheitsbegriff*, pp. 186 ff.

the explication of a key methodological concept. If philosophy conceived of as phenomenology is itself supposed to be a science, and an absolute, perfectly self-justifying science at that, then this means not merely that phenomenology has to undertake the clarification of sense by means of its concept of evidence, but above all else, it means that it must acquire for itself evident knowledge and that its own evidence is—in accordance with the claim to perfect, adequate evidence—really obtainable. With the radical demand of self-justification, phenomenology is confronted with the difficult task of discovering intentions that are in principle capable of being completely fulfilled.

Because evidence is never a simple act, but always involves several acts of identifying synthesis, the possibility of successfully bringing what is signitively meant into congruence with its intended fullness must be fundamentally questioned. Not only may empty intentions be frustrated, which may result in new evidence being established through conflict and differentiation, but they may also be erroneously fulfilled, thus leading us to merely assumed evidence which actually requires correcting.<sup>12</sup>

Whereas such questions involving claims of evidence could be solved with the help of further evidence, fundamental difficulties arise in view of a fact that has not been considered up until now. For the fulfilling intention is by no means a simple act, but already a synthetic structure of fulfilling intentions. All evidence is, therefore, a synthesis of at least two kinds, namely a synthesis of coincidence in the identification of what is meant with itself in its intuitive fullness, and fulfillment which for its part is established solely in the synthesis of fulfilling intuition. Accordingly, *adequate evidence* demands not only the identification of an intended objectivity through intuitive fulfillment, so that every one of the partial signitive intentions is completely fulfilled, but also that all syntheses of fulfillment are successful and can in principle be concluded. The question is: Where can phenomenology ever obtain such perfect evidence for itself?

Adequate evidence is certainly not to be found in the realm of perception of things in space. The numerous analyses by Husserl on this subject provide us again and again with ideal examples of inadequate evidence which present the object in question from only 'one side' and in a profile caught from a definite perspective and can, therefore, be misleading. The object comprehended here is it *itself* only as '*the same thing*' in a continual and unified process of perception.

12. The fact that evidence can be deceptive, misleading, and merely assumed to be evidence, indicates the methodological orientation of Husserl's concept of evidence (for example, already in LU II, 2; 143; or LI, 785f.). The dissolution or correction of deceptive evidence can, of course, only result again in new evidence: "Even evidence which passes itself off as apodictic can expose itself as a deception and presupposes, therefore, similar evidence on which it 'shatters'" (XVII, 164; or FT, 156). Compare here pp. 134f.

But whereas the self-givenness characteristic of spatial objectivity merely consists of a regular succession of individual fulfillments, each of which remain imperfect in regard to the total object, adequate evidence appears to be guaranteed, at least initially, in immanent perception where what is meant is included in the meaning as "*reell*" [that is, as a part of the mental act]. Only what is comprehended in immanent perception can be brought to adequate givenness. But everything that is immanently perceived will also be adequately perceived insofar as "nothing is attributed" to it that is not "given as *reell* and intuitively presented in the experience itself" (III, 239; or ID, 278f; II, 354[?]). This conception of Husserl's became fundamental for his concept of phenomenology as a science of pure consciousness developed in the *Ideas I* of 1913, where it was still dominant.

The kinds of knowledge belonging to immanent knowledge are, on the one hand, the pure knowledge of formal logic and, on the other, the controversial material [*synthetic a priori*] knowledge of essences: an understanding of which Husserl nearly hindered (and not merely for the superficial reader) with the mistaken choice of the term, 'intuition of essences.' But precisely here, it is necessary to take Husserl by his word and not become stalled in the merely signitive understanding of this term, but to bring what he meant 'to self-givenness.'

Husserl characterized the fulfillment that is decisive here as *categorial intuition* which as formal is concerned with achieving logical, that is, analytical-*a priori* self-givenness on the one side, and as material is supposed to determine the [*a priori*] knowledge of essences on the other. In both cases, the problem of evidence results not only from the fact that categorial intuition cannot be a simple act, as was already the case with the 'continual' synthesis which fuses partial acts of sensory intuition, but also because the categorial intuition is supposed to be a special act of synthesis of the kind that is *founded* in sensory acts (LU II, 2; 182; or LI, 817). Even before that, however, the concept of categorial intuition could appear questionable. It is, for example, by no means obvious that signitive and intuitive modes of givenness should be distinguished in the categorial area as well. And finally, the character of fulfillment seems to be so different in the case of the logical-analytical objectivity on the one hand, and of the givenness of essences on the other, that a single term for both would only appear to cause confusion.

Husserl justified the enlargement of the concept of intuition initially by referring to empirical propositions. Because states of affairs and not objects of perception are intended in empirical propositions, the signitive intention here already goes beyond every sensory object which can be given insofar as it contains 'categorial forms,' such as copula and conjunctions, to which nothing perceptible corresponds. Since it is only possible for those elements of meaning in a proposition to be fulfilled by sensory intuition which can be represented "by alphabetical symbols," whereas this is impossible for the "complementary meanings of form,"<sup>13</sup> and since the entire proposition is

understood as an expression of what is given in perception, "there must in any case be an act which serves the categorial elements of meaning in the same way in which mere sensory perception serves the material elements of meaning. The essential sameness of the function of fulfillment . . . makes it unavoidable . . . that every fulfilling act be described as *intuition* and its intentional correlate as *object*." The traditional concept of intuition, therefore, is expanded so that it encompasses the class of all acts "which are characterized by the fact that something appears in them as 'real,' and that as 'self-given'" (LU II, 2; 142f., also 165; or LI, 785f., also 803).

The meaning of our talking about 'perception,' 'intuition,' or 'representation' of *states of affairs* first led Husserl to the assumption of categorial acts. These do not, of course, give categorial objects in the same way that sensory intuitions yield objects of perception, since they do not have an independent meaning. Proof of categorial fulfillment cannot, therefore, be established by asserting a kind of supersensory intuitivity for categorial forms. It can only be obtained by showing that categorial intuition is a specific kind of *synthesis*. It does not, however, connect objects or glue them together as though they were parts of the state of affairs, but it yields the latter as a new object which it achieves by also performing the simple perceptions of objects upon which it is dependent, and unifying them—within certain given limitations of freedom—by the means of categorial formation.<sup>14</sup>

Although Husserl justifies in a very precise way the concept of categorial intuition in the pertinent analyses of the sixth Logical Investigation, whereby he provides the means of more precisely defining the idea of "evidence of empirical states of affairs," it appears questionable whether the evidence of purely logical states of affairs can also be explained with the help of the thus expanded concept of intuition. For, if the difference between empty intention and fulfillment also exists here, it is in any event questionable how categorial intuition can in any way offer the possibility of fulfillment, since categorial intention would now be claimed for logical forms without any 'content matter.'

The only points of reference that might help us to answer these questions are to be found in the two concluding chapters of the sixth Logical Investigation.<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, even the signitive, pure categorial intentions do not require that all associated cointentions of sensory contents be simply

13. See LU II, 2; 135; or LI, 779. Here already Husserl considers assertions from the formal point of view of logic as it was developed later and in the distinctions mentioned anticipates the logical concepts of 'variables' and 'logical constants.'

14. See LU II, 2; 186; see also 152, 157; or LI, 819f.; see also 792 f., 796f. Categorial intuition is, therefore, not a simple act of intuiting directly given objectivity, but a founded synthetic act. Correspondingly, the 'intuition of essences,' as a categorial intuition, also cannot be a simple act of intuiting 'higher' objects. Compare here p. 128ff.

dropped, but that these should become—within certain limitations—variable. Precisely thereby the analyticity of the logical laws becomes phenomenologically evident (LU II, 2; 189, 195; or LI, 822, 827). Thus, the understanding of such laws does not demand a categorial intuition that actually presents certain sensory contents, which would merely amount to an exemplary 'illustration.' Nor does it demand anything so absurd as an intuition of variable or even unspecified content. On the contrary, what is demanded for the evidence of logical laws is a categorial intuition with a very specific function of fulfillment. Because the signitive intention does not have a 'simple' object, but instead has a categorial—even though it is founded in sensory perception—*synthesis* as its object, it is the responsibility of the categorial intuition to actually carry out this synthesis. Again and again, Husserl demanded the 'realization,' the 'establishment' of the fulfilling synthesis. In this synthesis is seen the specific self-givenness of pure logic (LU, II 2; 190, 195f., 198; or LI, 823, 826f., 829).

In this way, phenomenological insight is gained not only into the necessity of distinguishing between signitive and fulfilling intentions, which was also explained by Husserl as the difference between 'inauthentic' or purely symbolic understanding (sufficient, however, for logical 'technique') and 'authentic' cognition in the realm of the purely logical. At the same time, a false hypostatization of logic could also be avoided, which Husserl seemed to be suggesting in his earlier investigations through the use of several misleading formulations. For as much as the objective character of the logical is prominent here, it is not conceived of in terms of things, the objective character being nothing other than the actual synthetic realization of the fulfilling intention in which logical structures as such are first constituted.

Regarding the question of the adequacy of logical evidence, there is hardly a reference to be found in the *Logical Investigations*. Apparently, Husserl did not consider it necessary to discuss it there. The point of focus is not the securing of perfect logical evidence, but the attempt to establish also for the formal-categorial intuition a fulfilling function for signitive intentions in order thereby to explicate phenomenologically the concept of logical knowledge.<sup>15</sup> Could Husserl have seriously considered any kind of evidence other than adequacy and perfection of self-givenness in an area of analytical knowledge apriori, which from the very beginning excludes 'perspectival'

15. We are omitting here the next to the last chapter in the seventh Logical Investigation in which Husserl, in search of sensory 'representatives' of categorial formation, improperly draws categorial formation close to 'apperception' of data of sensation in simple sensory perception. Husserl himself later rejected this chapter and did not even rewrite it. (Compare his preface to the second edition in 1913.)

16. This goal is expressly valid, however, only for simple logical states of affairs for which it would be relatively easy to show a context of foundation with corresponding sensory fundaments. Husserl is aware of the fact that he has,

one-sidedness? It will be much later, however, when Husserl returns to this question.

Different problems develop with the question of evidence for essences and the relationships between essences. In dealing with them Husserl found that synthetic a priori which give his phenomenology—a rough draft of which he had just completed in 1913 in the first volume of the *Ideas*—the reputation of being a phenomenologically untenable system of metaphysical realism and conceptual Platonism. This was despite its turn toward the transcendental dimension. This criticism was not entirely unjustified. The self-assurance with which Husserl assumes an 'intuition of essences' in the introductory chapter of the *Ideas I* must even appear strange when the relevant discussions in the *Logical Investigations* are considered. Not only is the kind of evidence Husserl assumes for universal essences there disputable, but also the sense of the assertion of their existence is questionable to begin with. This is even more important when one considers the fact that Husserl's phenomenology, as a philosophy of the absolutely ultimate foundation, looks upon its own assertions as statements about essences.

Up until now, however, it appears to have been largely overlooked that for Husserl not only the knowledge of essences in the strict sense, but also *proof* that universal essences exist, was tied to the exhibition of corresponding fulfilling acts in which they are constituted as 'given' (LU II, 1; for example 108f., 144ff., 162, 163; or LI, 339 f., 369 ff., 382ff.). In fact, the ontological question actually does coincide here with the question of a fulfilling intuition, because proof of their existence could not be regarded as given by signitive intentions and their mere 'minding' (*Meinen*) of essences. Such a minding would be harmless, but it could never lead to an eidetic phenomenology. Thus, the material-categorial intuition, as opposed to the function of the categorial intuition in the realm of the formal a priori, carries here the burden of proof, which must have seemed all the more difficult in as much as its proper structure and achievement were hidden by the misleading name of the intuition of essences. Their phenomenological explication is further complicated by the fact that Husserl allowed grievous compositional flaws in his analyses to slip through here, faults that no doubt can also be regarded as an indication of his own uncertainty and dissatisfaction.<sup>17</sup>

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nonetheless, not even touched upon the larger area of 'mediate evidences' in the logical chain of argument.

17. In the second Logical Investigation, the so-called general intuition remains largely unexplained and is not very convincing. Husserl wanted to correct this deficiency later in the sixth Logical Investigation. Conspicuously, the intended clarification remained for the most part an unfulfilled promise. The relatively sparse explanations here, which were limited to narrow references to the second Investigation, remained far behind the subtle analyses of the formal-categorial intuition.

Husserl had already defended the 'legitimacy' of 'general objects' at the beginning of the second Logical Investigation, 'species' that cannot be derived from individual objects, whereby nothing more profound is meant than the meaning of general names. At the same time, Husserl realizes that his criticism of nominalism can only then be effective, when the doubt nominalists have as to how such objects can be 'represented' is also eliminated.<sup>18</sup> The 'general intuition' introduced for that purpose is described by Husserl as *ideative (ideierende) abstraction* (LU II, 2; 183; or LI, 818). It likewise represents a categorial intuition which together with the formal-categorial intuition has the character of a synthesis founded in sense perception (LU II, 1; 107ff., 153ff.; or LI, 337 ff., 376 ff.; LU II, 2; 161ff.; or LI, 799 ff.). As a material-categorial intuition, however, it differs in the manner of foundation, for the intention is no longer also directed toward the objects of the founding acts, which do not enter into the new intuition. Because the intuition of essences on the basis of individual objects does not identify one of its sensory-perceivable and dependent moments as such, but characterizes it as something *specific*, it is revealed to the eye as something *identical*, that is, realizable in an unlimited number of —perceivable as well as imaginary—individual cases, which because of this identification appear as 'of the same kind' in regard to the 'specific' consideration chosen. Understood in this way, the intuition of essences presents itself as a categorial synthesis of identification in such a way that it not only brings the empty presumptions of figurative speech into congruence with what is meant, but also first makes possible in such a synthesis of coincidence the constitution of the species as a novel categorial objectivity.

Regardless of how easy Husserl made it for his critics in the first volume of the *Ideas*, closer inspection of his work not only reveals that he cannot be criticized for such a thing as platonic essences, but it also allows the critical question to remain open—whether Husserl, especially in regard to the synthetic constitution of general essences 'via' the eidetic singularities, reached a satisfactory understanding of the sensory foundation underlying the synthesis of fulfillment. This question may remain unanswered, however, since Husserl later replaced the ideative abstraction with the *eidetic variation*. Its synthetic function differs from that of the ideative abstraction in that in-

18. See LU II, 1; 110, 121f., 141ff.; or LI, 340, 350 f., 366 ff. Husserl's critique of nominalism is carried out so that its counter-critique will not succeed insofar as it appeals to the fact that universals can be avoided by the use of a language built on pure predicate logic referring solely to individual objects. We agree with Tugendhat (*Der Wahrheitsbegriff*, pp. 138 f.) when he points out that the theory of knowledge is not concerned with the possibility of the exclusive use of predicates, but rather, the conditions of their understanding. As long as the nominalistic theories begin with the contention that the 'ability to represent' general objects cannot be comprehended, however, Husserl's attempt to clarify this question phenomenologically—incorrectly rejected as 'psychological'—remains meaningful.

dividual sensory intuitions no longer form the foundation, but rather, with the aid of an example, 'variations' can be produced through free and imaginative reconstruction, which achieve continual coincidence in the succession of their appearance. First, in this way something invariant can result, which only reveals its 'what,' its 'essence,' as a 'same thing' in a free progression through the multiplicity of its variations.<sup>19</sup>

Thus conceived, the constitution of the objectivity of essences doubtlessly remains free of the faults of ideative abstraction and also finally allows in principle the inclusion of essences of higher generality. What was called the fulfillment of signitive intention now appears as a synthesis in which what was merely presumably referred to formerly is now realized in random variations. The question, however, is again raised: Can *what* is meant actually be brought to adequate givenness in the process of variation? Can the evidence of essences as it is claimed here be understood at all as a complete synthesis of coincidence of what is meant with the content of a general concept that can be given once and for all?

Husserl appears to have at least hesitated for a while before claiming adequacy for the evidence of essences regarding something that can be only inadequately experienced. But "just as intuition can be perfected in principle within its categorial type, so can an essence be perfected in its categorial type," and for that reason the perfection of evidence for Husserl remains a goal that is apparently still considered to be in principle obtainable, although his argumentation here is not conclusive (V, 86, 91). In particular, Husserl's thinking seems to be that the knowledge of essences forming the foundation of a synthetic a priori does not permit any other kind of evidence except adequate evidence.<sup>20</sup>

Precisely this adequacy, however, appears to be questionable even on the basis of Husserl's own assumptions. If one accepts the procedure judiciously described in the theory of essences under the heading of the eidetic variation, in the process of which the meanings of names, designated as 'essences,' that is, the "what" of the names' intendings can be clarified and precisely conceptualized, then the kind of evidence acceptable here depends decisive-

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19. The concept of eidetic variation which was occasionally used as early as the sixth Logical Investigation (LU II, 2; 262, 183; or LI, 800, 817f.) advances later to the focal point of the discussion of essences. The explanations from 1925 in the ninth volume of the complete works (pp. 72ff.) can be found in part word for word in *Erfahrung und Urteil*, EJ, pp. 82ff.; see also II, 29ff.; or IP, 22ff.; I, 104ff.; or CM, 70ff.; XVII, 254f.; or FT, 247f..

20. In III, 336; or ID, 382 and III, 416, Husserl even speaks of the apodictical evidence of knowledge of essences. This is, however, expressly in contrast to the mere assertive evidence of facticity. Apodicticity and adequateness still coincide here. Even as late as 1924, Husserl considers adequate evidence to be free of doubt and calls "this peculiarity its apodicticity" (VIII, 35). A clear distinction is drawn between them for the first time in *Cartesian Meditations* (I, 55; or CM, 15).

ly on just this procedure and its possibilities. If, however, the eidetic variation consists of the free variation of the possibilities of imagination, the *open, endless* multiplicity on which Husserl repeatedly expounded (for example, IX, 76f.; or PP, 57 f.), then it is in principle left open to question as to whether the structural forms of such a progression—which has to synthesize “like with like” and in order to do so already has to carry out its own categorial syntheses of fulfillment—can at all guarantee completeness, that is, congruence of “the same thing” in the previously mentioned “overlapping coincidence.”

Beyond this, however, the problem in regard to the question of the evidence of essences is not even whether the synthesis that is to be established in such a variation leads to something identical in all variations. What is problematical is rather *as what* this identical something can appear. Complete and final determination cannot be assumed as an answer to the question here, because with its absolute endlessness the method of variation obviously does not offer any basis for this. It is exactly this openness, however, which makes the method of variation acceptable for what it is supposed to achieve, that is, as long as it is consistently restricted to what is reasonable to expect from it. It cannot, for example, make an essence comprehensible which has supposedly been established once and for all, having—one can hardly imagine how—‘emerged out of the completion of only a finite number of variations. Rather, it is this procedure of variation itself in which and *according to* whose categorial synthesis it is first determined what in a signitive intention achieves fulfillment.

The constitution of essences conceived of in this manner is suggested in Husserl's point of departure, but oddly enough it is not consistently advocated by him as was the basic concept of the formal-categorial synthesis of fulfillment. Only such a conception, however, could free itself from the untenable claim to adequacy in the evidence of essences without at the same time having to abandon the demand for evidence as such, which remains, entirely in the sense of Husserl, meaningful and necessary for a critical theory of knowledge even though it can only be approximately fulfilled.

Conditioned to such an extent by this procedure, the demand for evidence would seemingly come into an unavoidable conflict with phenomenology exactly at that point at which it was confident of providing philosophy with an absolute foundation, since this obviously requires a foundation in knowledge with that kind of finality which can be guaranteed phenomenologically only by adequate, perfect evidence.

### III

At the latest, it is in the lectures on the 'First Philosophy' (1923) that the problem of proof in philosophy become the central question for Husserl. The transcendental ego appears in his structure of ego-cogito-cogitatum as

the '*absolute basis*' upon which all the constitutive achievements are founded which in the last analysis allow sense and being of every kind to be comprehended phenomenologically. Husserl was already aware in earlier expositions of the '*primal givenness*' of the ego, which is insofar *apodictically* certain as there is not only no certainty of knowledge about objects that can prevail against it, but also and above all else because the transcendental ego in principle first guarantees the possibility of knowledge.

If, however, the ego is supposed to be the final point of appeal for all clarifications of meaning, and philosophy can only be established absolutely on this '*basis*,' then this ego must not only be final and unquestionable with regard to its existence—its empty '*that*,' without needing to be further grounded; the demand for evidence that must be methodologically secured must also be made for *what* it presents itself as in its existence. Is it, however, at all possible to acquire evidence and moreover adequate evidence about this? It is apparent that all inquiry into absolute grounds could only come to rest with the establishment of adequate evidence. The instruments of constitutional analysis which were later refined for the clarification of the correlations between *cogito* and *cogitatum* also led Husserl to a very remarkable shift in the problem of evidence.

How does the ego, which Husserl considers to be underatively given and apodictically certain, phenomenologically present itself at all? To begin with, it is unquestionably my ego. Even though it is transcendental, it is a factual individual ego. Nevertheless, everything the ego learns about itself in the process of '*transcendental self-experience*' should be understood as a statement about essences. Intentionality, the constitutive achievement of meaning, synthesis as a structural form of consciousness, the '*flow*' of consciousness in immanent time, the horizontality of all *experiences*, the acquisition of habitualities do not belong to me alone, but the '*the*' transcendental ego. This means that as soon as it is considered as constitutive in reflective phenomenological analysis, my ego has already been '*placed in concept*.' What I learn about my ego with regard to phenomenological constitution are then structural characteristics which must be conceived of as belonging to the putative *eidos* ego. This is necessary when a theory of the ego, an *egology*, and not an individual ego considered as a transcendental fact, is supposed to form the foundation for the final justification given by philosophy. For, in order to accomplish what it is supposed to, this theory has to contain more than just my biography with a simple transcendental twist. It must be understood, rather, as the doctrine of '*the*' transcendental ego. Disregarding the fact that the relation between the factual individual ego and the ego of the transcendental theory is one of the most difficult and least understood aspects of Husserl's phenomenology even today, the transcendental *eidos* ego raises a very peculiar problem of evidence which we want briefly to deal with here in closing.

The more Husserl inquires into the phenomenological structures of the

ego, the clearer it becomes to him that the transcendental experience of the self forms "only a small part of genuinely adequate experience," namely, the "living self-presence." Beyond this, however, there "stretches only an indefinite general and presumptive horizon." The discovery of *horizon intentionality* leads Husserl to the conclusion that the existence of the intrinsically first ground of knowledge is indeed without doubt absolutely certain, but not that "which defines its being more precisely" (I, 62; or CM, 28).<sup>21</sup>

If consciousness had already been characterized as a stream in immanent time in *Ideas I*, then Husserl now saw himself, in the context of the question of ultimate justification, forced by the consideration of the doubt-free existence of the transcendental ego, on the one hand, and the horizontally conditioned inadequateness of its *experiences*, on the other, to distinguish sharply between apodictic and adequate evidence. These two fulfill the postulate of the perfection of self-givenness in different ways. Whereas apodicticity excludes all doubt and in its modality means the impossibility of being different, adequateness refers, by way of contrast, to the fullness of the what-content, the complete givenness of what something is. What is decisive here is the fact that with this distinction also the possibility of apodictic, but inadequate evidence is given. This possibility is expressly "meant for the case of transcendental self-experience" (I, 62; or CM, 22). This, however, finally leads Husserl to a notable result.

The continual sinking of *experiences* of the ego into the past cannot be compensated for, even partially, by remembering, but rather every possibility of 'returning-to-something' — for Husserl the only credible procedure of identifying something objective — includes the inherent possibility of deception (XVII, 139 f., 251, 254). The question is therefore: "How far can the transcendental ego deceive itself about itself and how far does absolutely certain knowledge go despite this possible deception?" (I, 62; or CM, 23; VIII, 169 ff.).

The apodicticity of the ego is indeed retained as the absolute basis for the giving of sense. It is not merely restricted to the empty identity of 'I am,' but instead, "a 'universal apodictic structure of experience' of the ego extends throughout all the particular instances of givenness of real and possible self-experience — although individually they are not free of doubt" (I, 67, 138; or CM, 28, 103). To this degree, Husserl does not here abandon the idea of a

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21. As far as I can see, despite the fact that the apodictical certainty of the existence of the ego was repeatedly emphasized, Husserl avoided speaking about its self-givenness or evidence. In fact, it appears extremely questionable whether it is at all meaningful to postulate evidence — in the prevailing sense here of an identifying synthesis of coincidence — for the existence of the ego. However, we will have to set this question aside, because it would require, regarding the possibilities of the self-constitution of the ego, a detailed study of the problems of 'temporality.'

final foundation of all knowledge which cannot be further derived from something else. Being transcendental, however, this foundation does not have the character of a dogmatic bias, as though further critical questioning were to be eliminated by it. On the contrary, it is the presupposition of this structure of experience which makes it at all possible and meaningful to raise critical questions. As the basis of all possible knowledge as well as for error and its correction, it offers nothing less than a system of necessary conditions enabling all kinds of criticism of knowledge to be initially made and to be understood as such.

For each particular bit of knowledge within this transcendental framework, something takes place now that is essentially new. It becomes necessary to explain how knowledge "indicates further possible corroborating experiences within the horizon, but also how in accordance with its nature it leaves the possibility open for conflicting experiences to appear, leading to corrections in the form of varying determination or complete cancellation (illusion)" (XVII, 287; or FT, 281). The fact that this applies explicitly to all evidence (XVII, 164, 287; or FT, 156, 281) appears at first sight to contradict adequate evidence, at least insofar as adequate evidence, as a perfect synthesis of coincidence of what is meant with the thing itself, excludes the possibility of correction from the beginning. But the discovery of the *horizon structure* of all *experiences*, which itself forms a particular *moment in the ego's transcendental structure of experience (Erfahrung)* convinces Husserl that even evidence first conceived of as adequate can still implicitly contain unfulfilled intentions, indeed, must contain them, so that adequate evidence and its objective correlate, truth, become an idea lying in infinity (I, 97; or CM 62; XVII, 284; or FT 287; also VIII, 33).

Husserl thereby establishes the fact that all evidence—far from offering absolute certainty and security against deception and error—has irrevocably *presumptive* character. It constantly points beyond itself to further evidence, not only of 'something else,' but also of the 'the same thing,' and can be supported or cancelled by it. Evidence of categorial objects, that is, logical and eidetical evidence, is also no longer excluded from this. Though it appears difficult to comprehend the necessity of correction for logical evidences, nevertheless it is also true of logical evidences that they are intentional *formations (Gebilde)* standing within 'horizons of sense,' pointing toward hidden intentional implications and revealing themselves as results of a *genesis of meaning* (XVII, 215; or FT, 206f.). The phenomenological disclosure of their constitution shows at the same time, however, that they can never be concluded insofar as every new means of access to the object also provides new perspectives for determination.

The structural moment that Husserl had originally proved solely for the inadequate self-givenness of external perception, its fundamental one-sidedness and limited perspective, thus is found to characterize all kinds of evidence. The references to the intentional horizons, however, now present

themselves not as recessive, but rather as open ended. It is not merely coincidental that the dimension of history finally opens itself up to Husserl, thus making possible the structural analysis of the life-world (*Lebenswelt*).

Husserl's deepening of the concept of horizon, which no longer refers only to the objective background of a perceivable object, but also—with the discovery of the 'horizon intentionality' (XVII, 207, 285; or FT, 199f., 279)—to the initially hidden implications of knowing itself, may be regarded as the decisive step forward with which the necessity of a critique of transcendental experience became apparent to him, if phenomenology was not to remain entangled in transcendental naivety (VIII, 169 f.; I, 62; or CM, 22f.). Husserl was no longer able to carry out this critique in detail. The critical distance to his own preparations for it, in particular regarding his conception of evidence, however, is immense: "I realized very late that all criticism of evidence is . . . not only . . . to be accomplished in the context of phenomenology, but also that all of this criticism leads back to a *final critique* in the form of a *critique of these evidences* which *phenomenology*, *itself still naive, unreflectively executes at the first level*. That is to say, however: *The inherently first critique of knowledge . . . is the transcendental self-critique of phenomenological knowledge itself* (XVII, 294f.; or FT, 288 f.).

Thus Husserl at the same time succeeds in justifying the demand for an ultimate grounding of philosophy in such a way that the danger of an uncritical dogmatism is averted. Since this justification is not offered in the form of supposedly irrefutable, absolute knowledge, but on the contrary, the phenomenological proof of the impossibility of such knowledge is in principle derived from the ego itself and its transcendental structure of experience, Husserl is actually reviving for philosophy nothing less than the spirit of critical rationalism and scientific thought corresponding in principle to the modern understanding of science. At the same time, he surpasses this understanding in its positivity by demanding a methodologically regulated and reflected inquiry into the presuppositions which as such can only be established in reference to the structure of achievement of transcendental subjectivity. What is called the 'final' justification here is not a privilege to incontestable results which ostensibly can be acquired phenomenologically, rather, it is the inclusion of a dimension of transcendental questioning. The radical inquiry into the final source of all knowledge demanded by this dimension fails only because of the conditions of its own possibility, without being able to fully understand them. Subjectivity as the capacity for the positing of being and constituting sense remained for Husserl until the end the 'greatest of all puzzles.'

Husserl's principle of evidence, which is supposed to be the norm for phenomenological inquiry, first becomes sufficiently understandable in view of the thus conceived question of the most ultimate foundation. If this is understood not as a discursive sequence of deductive steps from some kind of

indisputable final principles, but in the sense of the last possible explanation of the constitutive achievements of subjectivity on the basis of its transcendental structure of experience, then the methodological requirement of evidence means nothing other than a specific obligation to justify all statements including transcendental-phenomenological ones. It requires that what "is really 'seen,' be brought to true expression" (XVII, 285; or FT, 279). Insofar as the possibility of deception belongs to every kind of evidence, however, every justification in the form of 'I see it' becomes in principle preliminary—acceptable only for the time being—and can in turn be modified, but only by further evidence (XVII, 164; or FT, 156).

Because Husserl's concept of evidence excludes the possibility of correcting evidence by anything other than evidence, it remains the only legitimate basis of all statements that is not subject to further justification. Because evidence has on the other hand an anticipatory character that cannot be abolished, however, Husserl's principle also demands that all achieved evidence, in order that it may be tested, may eventually be relativized.<sup>22</sup>

Many questions remain, but we are only going to consider one here. How do the instruments of phenomenological analysis developed by Husserl appear in light of his principle of evidence? Husserl's philosophy is characterized not only by a pronounced consciousness of method; the course of his research is also determined by the insight that methodological steps must be legitimized so that the problems dealt with on a number of occasions can hardly be understood without reference to it. Neither was he lacking in self-criticism. But did the question ever occur to him, a man who throughout long years of research was inspired by, even obsessed with, the idea of searching for the '*thing itself*,' as to whether the phenomenological equipment that he had developed and continually refined for that purpose had not gone beyond all purely descriptive goals? Is not the constitutive-phenomenological analysis of the later years, conceived in order finally to make functioning intentionality also into a 'thing' of transcendental self-experience, in the end, instead of being merely a means of 'uncovering' and bringing it to 'givenness,' for its part already a *constitutivum* of constituting subjectivity?

If it is true that transcendental experience can only be the field of self-

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22. Here, finally, is the motive for Husserl's concept of a 'working philosophy,' of philosophical research that progresses only through 'meticulous work,' as well as the key to understanding his repeated demand that philosophy could only become a rigorous science through the spirit of radical questioning and with "the steady conviction of self-responsibility" (XVII, 285; or FT, 279). Concerning this demand, see, in particular, L. Landgrebe, *Der Weg*, pp. 166 ff., where the author, in a detailed interpretation of Husserl's train of thought in volume VIII of the *Husserliana*, places Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, as 'First Philosophy,' under the main idea of self-responsibility.

reflection for the ego, insofar as the ego is capable of gaining it not by reflecting upon transcendental experience as its presumably given fund – however inadequately accessible this fund may be – but by '*bringing it forth*' by virtue of its own procedure, then the meaning of transcendental experience must be understood in terms of its means of access, including its presuppositions and implications. The objection that the transcendental experience would then be nothing more than a methodological construction of Husserl's phenomenology would, of course, be remiss. Also, transcendental experience, like any other empirical procedure, does not stop being experience when it stands in theoretically mediated 'horizons.' On the contrary, it first attains its determinability as an empirical procedure in this way.

But it is one thing for it to be this way and another for it to be critically grasped and understood in all its consequences. It appears that Husserl, despite definite retractions in his original confidence in the power of 'seeing,' was unable to retain its procedural limitation in full view phenomenologically. Even with all his efforts to critically control each particular step he had taken, he never became sufficiently aware of the methodological '*horizons*' of his own procedure, thereby leaving, so to speak, a transcendental-positivistic remnant in his phenomenology. The fact that this remnant was not really overcome by the later concept of evidence is indicative merely of a limitation in the work that Husserl, who was denied the long-term pursuit of insights he had acquired late in life, was able to complete.

The significance of Husserl's conception of evidence, however, consists precisely in the fact that in its consequences it goes beyond this point. If, instead of searching for irrefutable truths, Husserl's principle of evidence demands the openness of inquiry for augmentation, correction, 'different determination' – not merely for the objectivity that is to be known, but also in particular for the acts, which claim knowledge, as object-constituting intentions – then the discovery of the intentional horizons, which was so decisive for the principle of evidence, should also be made fruitful for the acts of constitutive-phenomenological analysis themselves. But is it then permissible that Husserl's apodictical structure of experience of the transcendental ego should appear otherwise than as being identifiable as one and the same in many analyzing intentions, while other perspectives for determining the ego appear on the basis of other possible ways of self-reflection?

The fact that even the *eidos* ego cannot in principle be excluded from such relativization of evidence, as was finally demanded by Husserl for all kinds of evidence, must appear as a consequence subsequently involving considerable risks for Husserl's undertaking. Because this is a result of nothing less than the 'first methodological principle' of this undertaking itself, however, Husserl's concept of evidence proves to be the opposite of what it appears to many at first sight to be: not a 'miraculous' criterion for

absolute truth, but a critical court of appeal before which all the steps in the search for truth are to be subject to a trial of verification and to be held accountable.

### Translation Notes

i In order to retain the distinction between "*Erlebnis*" —referring to what is lived through— and "*Erfahrung*" —referring to objects (which cannot be fully encountered)— both of which can be rendered by the English "experience," experience will be written in italic when rendering "*Erlebnis*" and in roman type when rendering "*Erfahrung*."

"*Evidenz*," which is rendered throughout the translation as "evidence," is not to be understood to connote the kind of evidence normally associated with scientific demonstration, but rather, it is to take on the meaning suggestion in Ströker's Introduction.

# ACTIONS AND THE PROCESSES OF REFLECTION\*

Reiner Wiehl

Translated by Robert E. Wood

## I Transcendental Philosophy as Theory of Action<sup>1</sup>

### Reflection as Principle of a Transcendental Theory of Action

The term “transcendental” is widely employed today in direct or indirect allusion to Kant. He characterizes in this way a peculiar mode of thought that does not deal directly with objects in general or in particular, but with the “conditions of the possibility” of objective knowledge, and thus with objects “in themselves” only mediately and indirectly. But one should not fail to note that this technical philosophical term, by reason of its abstraction from the peculiar conceptual context of Kantian philosophy, has lost much of its terminological precision. The idea of a transcendental philosophy closely

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1. Habermas, especially in *Erkenntnis und Interesse* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1968); or *Knowledge and Human interests* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), has given decisive impetus in social philosophy to using classical transcendental philosophy to develop a theory of action. The works of P. Lorenzen and his students are more directly related to Kant's notion of the transcendental in that they consider actions in terms of the conditions for their methodical justification. See Lorenzen, *Methodisches Denken* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1958), pp. 25ff.; and *Zum normativen Fundament der Wissenschaft*, ed. F. Kambartel and J. Mittelstrass (Frankfurt: Athenäum, 1973). A central problem for both transcendental philosophical positions is the dualism in modern philosophy between science and the life-world thematized in Husserl's later transcendental phenomenology. See H. G. Gadamer's “Nachwort” to the third ed. of *Wahrheit und Methode* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [ Paul Siebeck], 1960); or *Truth and Method*, trans. Garrett Barden and John Cunningham (New York: Seabury, 1975). On the reception of transcendental philosophy in analytical philosophy, see R. Bittner, “Transzental,” in *Handbuch philosophischer Grundbegriffe*, ed. H. Krings, H. M. Baumgartner, and C. Wild (Munich: Kösler, 1974), vol. 3.

bound up with it has not remained undisturbed by this transformation.<sup>2</sup> Of course, the loss of formal precision is more serious than mere terminological fuzziness, than the reduction of the definition of a technical expression to a provisional designation. One is tempted to speak of the disappearance of the very idea that it expresses, and of indetermination in its universal concept. Two features in this historical transformation of transcendental philosophy are especially noteworthy: a kind of dissociation of the transcendental method and, connected with this, a modification of its worth and its range of application.

The transcendental method is in a certain respect "more," in another respect "less," than merely transcendental reflection. In any case, the former is to be distinguished from the latter. From the standpoint of this method, it is not enough to develop a series of particular criteria that can be applied toward distinguishing a realm of objects of possible experience (the realm of the phenomena) from an entirely different realm, that which cannot be experienced (the realm of the "thing in itself"). Kant's transcendental philosophy is oriented toward the idea of the systematic totality of all rational knowledge and, viewed in this way as transcendental method, is directed toward the projection of an "architectonic" of reason.<sup>4</sup> In this lies its authentic vocation, and its critique of reason serves this end: the critical search for universal conditions of truth for an objectively valid theoretical and practical rational knowledge. In other words, transcendental method as such consists of two clearly distinguishable partial methods, each of which is constitutive of the other: on the one hand, a method of rational criticism of all necessary conditions of rational knowledge, and on the other, a method of rational reconstruction of objective reality from the principles of reason. While the first method distinguishes a false employment of reason from a correct one, and thus grounds the possibility of a true rational knowledge, the second is nothing other than the correctly understood use of reason itself, which, following the conditions of true rational knowledge, reconstructs the whole of objective reality from its own principles.<sup>5</sup>

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2. See essays "Transformation der Transzendenten Philosophie," in K. O. Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973), vol. 2, pp. 155ff.
3. Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (New York: Macmillan, 1968) has aided in giving the concept of criterion greater significance as a concept of critical method than the expression "conditions of the possibility of . . ." bound up with a particular logic of argumentation. See also D. Birnbacher, *Die Logik der Kriterien: Analysen zur Spätphilosophie Wittgensteins* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1974).
4. With respect to this goal of an architectonic of reason, Kant speaks of an "art of system" and understands by it "the doctrine of the scientific in our knowledge in general"; *Critique of Pure Reason* (henceforth CPR), Transcendental Doctrine of Method, section 3, A 832, B 860.
5. With respect to that which is here termed reconstruction, Kant vigorously distinguishes between philosophical "rational knowledge from concepts" and

One can speak of the unity of the transcendental method in a manifold sense. Distinct possibilities of dissociation correspond to these diverse meanings of transcendental-methodical unity. The unity of a transcendental method is characterized as *speculative* insofar as the critical grounding of the basic principles of a true usage of reason follows these basic principles itself, thus insofar as the basic principles that are followed in the grounding of the possibility of true rational knowledge "agree" with the grounded basic principles of this possibility. On the other hand, transcendental method is called *absolute* insofar as the basic principles of a true use of reason, grounded through the critique of reason, agree with the rational principles of rational world-construction. The concepts of speculative and absolute are thus to be clearly distinguished not only in general, but also in particular, as characteristics of the unity of one transcendental method, since they relate to the various ways reason might be in agreement with itself. On the other hand, both of these distinct methodological types are conceived together in the unity of an absolute and speculative method. Hegel's speculative dialectical method is the most famous example of this type of unitary transcendental method.<sup>6</sup> In their unity the partial methods of rational critique of reason and rational reconstruction of all rational knowledge are not really, but only conceptually, distinguishable, or rather only on a metaphorical or metamethodological level. Accordingly, the speculative and the absolute, united in a single transcendental method, refer either to the various types and modes of the agreement of reason with itself or to the various features of this agreement as realized. To these different references different concepts of transcendental reflection correspond, conceived either as the principle of speculation, the principle of the absolute, or as the relatively complex principle of a unitary speculative-absolute method. Transcendental reflection as a determinate methodological principle is to be distinguished from a universal notion of reflection as such. Transcendental reflection is to be set in relation to the transcendental-methodological character of the speculative and of the absolute and determined by the relation.

The premethodical universal notion of reflection is complex in itself; in

mathematical "knowledge through construction of concepts," *CPR*, A 713, B 741. With Kant's immediate followers this distinction leads to critique and anti-critique. See B. Taureck, *Das Schicksal der philosophischen Konstruktion* (Vienna and Munich: Oldenbourg, 1975). The matter of philosophical construction can indeed be referred back to Kant himself who not only speaks of mathematical, but also of metaphysical construction, although, for the sake of clearly distinguishing them; wrote *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaften*, *Vorrede*, A XIV.

6. Hegel has given the most subtle analysis of the relation of the absolute to the speculative in "Actuality," in *The Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969), vol. 1, Book 2, section 3 (hereafter cited as *Logic*).

part it is to be considered as a special relation, in part as a special movement. Reflection can thus be called a self-relation, but also a self-movement.<sup>7</sup> A self-relation is distinguished from relations between two or more clearly distinguished relata in that, instead of several, only a single relatum is given, and to it a relation which relates this relatum to itself.<sup>8</sup> For example, self-identity ( $A = A$ ) is something other than identity-in-difference ( $A = B$ ). Analogously, self-movement is to be distinguished from such movements as occur between different entities or diverse facts, for instance, various circumstances. The types of movement where something arises out of something else, or where something is dissolved into something else, or where something is altered or caused by something else, are not self-movements. Self-relation is a being-in-oneself, self-movement a being-moved-in-oneself or also a becoming-moved-in-oneself. Both self-relation and self-movement presuppose the reality of something that because of its self-relation is spoken of as "it itself" whenever it is said of it: "it itself" is, in a distinction between this or that, "this" and not "that"; for example, "it itself" is, in distinction from that, something self-moved. Self-movement thus presupposes self-relation whenever one can say of the subject of this movement "it itself" moves itself in itself and not in something other. Being-in-oneself contains the possibility of a being-in-oneself and being-in-oneself-through-oneself. The paradigm of self-relation is every possible theoretical object; paradigms of self-movement are the rotation of a circle about its center and the thought movement of the transcendental-methodical I, of "transcendental apperception."<sup>9</sup> It is common to the subjects of these paradigmatic self-movements that they move themselves while resting in themselves and that they must be able to refer back to every possible point of their existence.

As self-relation and self-movement, transcendental reflection is the principle of transcendental method in a twofold sense, first as principle of deter-

7. The connection between self-relation and self-movement is one of the basic problems of the classical theories of dialectic in Plato and Hegel. Plato emphasizes the self-relation ( $\kappa\alpha\theta^* \alpha\tau\tau\circ\circ$ ) of forms ( $\epsilon\iota\delta\eta$ ) with respect to objective movement, especially in the *Sophist* (254c) and in pt. 2 of the *Parmenides*. For Hegel, however, self-movement is the methodical epistemological principle of all relations as such (*Logic*, vol. 1, Book 2, section 3). The commonality and difference of these two theories are mirrored in this difference of emphasis.
8. See R. Wiehl, "Selbstbeziehung und Selbstanwendung dialektischer Kategorien," address to the convention of the International Hegel Society on Hegel's *Logic*, Chantilly: 1972, published in *Hegel-Studien*, 1975.
9. On the interdependence of reflection and transcendental subjectivity, see D. Henrich, "Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht," in *Subjectivität und Metaphysik*, Festschrift für W. Cramer (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1966), pp. 188ff.; K. Cramer, "Erlebnis. Thesen zu Hegels Theorie des Selbstbewusstseins mit Rücksicht auf die Aporien eines Grundbegriffs nachhegelscher Philosophie," in *Hegel-Studien*, Beiheft 11, pp. 537ff.

mination and second as principle of truth. Reflection as principle of determination signifies that each theoretical element which can be specified in the course of a transcendental-methodical development must necessarily be determined as "it itself" and, "as such," must be able to be distinguished within the methodical whole from other theoretical elements that can be defined. It must be possible, in every phase whatever of the development of the methodical process, to return from this phase to any theoretical element whatever in another phase of the same process. Each of these determinate individual elements must be identifiable from each determinate point of the transcendental-methodical process; it must be possible to locate it in its position against the other elements and to reconstruct it as a theoretical element.<sup>10</sup> Transcendental reflection is, from the point of view of the principle of determination, a condition for the possibility of definite transcendental locations and functions, a condition for the possibility of methodical reconstruction. From the second point of view, transcendental reflection is the principle of truth and signifies as such the agreement of reason with itself. The "speculative" and the "absolute" as modes of the self-agreement of reason are to be considered in the first place as principles of truth with respect to transcendental reflection.

In the unity of transcendental reflection a connection between the principle of determination and the principle of truth is given. This connection can be considered from four diverse points of view. It is either (a) the principle of truth for the principle of determination, (b) the latter subordinated to the former, or (c) both principles coalescing into the unity of an absolute speculative reflection. Finally, there is a further possibility of connection (d) when both principles work together relatively independently, and in such a way that neither of the two are subordinated or can be reduced to the other.

(a) The principle of truth can be seen as a special principle of determination, and from a twofold point of view. First, agreement (*adaequatio*) with itself is a special form of self-relation and is to be distinguished from an

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10. Among the three transcendental syntheses which Kant distinguishes in the first edition of the transcendental deduction of the concepts of pure reason, that of the "synthesis of recognition in concepts" comes closest to the characteristic of reflection. However here I emphasize only the universal aspect of reproducibility as such, which is also realized in a unique way in both other syntheses and not least in the principle of transcendental apperception. Husserl and Heidegger in a consistent way have made the idea of reproduction central to their discussions of transcendental subjectivity, though in both cases this occurs in a highly specialized manner and is therefore of limited validity: with Husserl in the form of a transcendental-genetic theory of inner time-consciousness (*Husserliana* 10, paragraphs 15ff.; or *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-consciousness*, trans. James S. Churchill, [ Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964]); with Heidegger by his familiar thesis on the origin of all synthesis in the imagination (see *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. James S. Churchill, [ Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962], section 3).

agreement of something with something else, analogous to self-identity as distinguished from identity-in-diversity. Besides, the subject of agreement, that something of which it is said that it is in agreement with itself, is a special something, namely reason in itself; and this something is necessarily distinguished from other realities or entities, for which also the possibility of an agreement with itself must be granted, as, for example, from a special condition of human perception or from the human soul as a peculiar entity in a peculiar state. From this point of view of a twofold specification of the principle of determination, the principle of truth appears in relation to it as subordinate and dependent: as a particular principle of a special region of validity of the transcendental method or as a specification and concretization of the universally valid principle of determination in the course of the methodical process. From this point of view the principle of determination is a universally valid principle of transcendental method.

But, on the other hand, there is (b), the fact that this method does not intend determination as its ultimate end; rather it intends to be a process of the knowledge of truth. Hence, it is not adequate to render precise "as such," and thus as theoretical elements, the diverse individual elements that appear in this process. Rather a particular determinate truth-content must belong to these—as such abstract—"theories," which can be identified and located within the methodical process as a whole. Their possible identification and location in the totality of the transcendental method thus presupposes a basic and general agreement of reason with itself in relation to this whole and with respect to every possible theoretical element in it. Thus, transcendental reflection from this point of view is the principle of transcendental method, not, however, in the mode of universal self-relation and self-movement and as a universally valid principle of determination. Rather, determination is here subordinate to the principle of truth, and transcendental reflection is the principle of transcendental method in the mode of universal agreement of reason with itself. In this case the determination of each individual element as "it itself" appears as a particular theory in the whole of the methodical process, and likewise each possible identification and location of it appears as an instance of a universal and complete agreement of reason with itself, as an example of such an agreement or as its concretization.

The universal theoretical characteristics of coherence and consistency correspond to these diverse modes of functioning, proper to the principles of determination and truth. Coherence means the determination of every theoretical element given through possible identification and localization, in relation to every other element in the unity of a methodical process. By consistency one understands the agreement of reason with itself, for instance, in the mode of freedom from contradiction, in relation to every particular element in a processive unity. Thus, the system-characteristic of coherence corresponds more to the realization of the principle of determination, the

characteristic of consistency more to the realization of the principle of truth. But analogous to both principles, both system-characteristics can be realized in different ways in systematic theories: partly in direct independence from, partly in definite dependence upon one another in a one-sided or reciprocal conditional and subsuming relation; finally, partly in an association that does not allow a precise direct distinction with respect to the realization of both characteristics.

### The Fourfold Dualism of the Transcendental Theory of Action

The problem of a transcendental theory of action presents itself here first of all as a problem of the unity of transcendental reflection and the unity of transcendental method. Thus it holds generally that unities of a definite type are to be grasped as unities of dissociated elements or as dissociated elements of a given unity. Thus a unity stands in connection with another, both being of like or diverse types. From this general point of view, the problem of a transcendental theory of action is not only a problem of unity, but correspondingly also a problem of the dissociation of typical unities of transcendental reflection or of transcendental method. Thus the specific unity of absolute and speculative methods, for which we possess the historical example of the speculative dialectic of Hegel, is representable as the synthetic unity of the dissociated elements from the methodical unity of another unity-type. Such an alternative type is exemplified by Kant's transcendental method. This type can be viewed as the specific product of a definite dissociation of absolute and speculative unity. This product of dissociation can be comprehensively characterized from the viewpoint thus far presented as methodical dualism.<sup>11</sup> Dualism thus means the necessarily exclusive division of a real unity of elements into two real elementary unities, and indeed with such necessity that (a) both these real elements cannot be united again into one single real element that is as real as either of them, and such that (b) no third equally real element can be given besides the two, which are the sole possible elements. One can consider such methodical dualism from four points of view.

*The Dualism of Rational Modes of Procedure.* This is the dualism of: the procedure of the rational critique of reason, and the procedure of the rational reconstruction of all rational knowledge, both of which are in no way integrated into a unitary and similarly real procedure or let themselves be reduced to a single such procedure, and to which in relation to their ex-

11. The four dualistic aspects of transcendental philosophy distinguished here are all concerned with the basic dualism of theoretical and practical reason, Kant's specific transformation of Cartesianism. For the problematic aspects of this dualism in our context, the dualism of the singular process of reflection and the universal method of reflection is, above all, of greatest importance. See note 16.

clusive and complementary givenness, there can be no third equally real rational procedure.<sup>12</sup> Thus there is no logical priority of one procedure over the other, no rational deductive connection that permits the one procedure to be conceived of as the direct logical continuation of the other. But neither could one speak of a real priority of one or the other procedure, of a primacy of theoretical knowledge that could be grounded in a third equally real procedure. The basic principle of critical transcendental philosophy, that a critique of reason must necessarily precede every metaphysics of knowledge, can just as little be grounded sufficiently in the critique of reason as in the metaphysics of rational knowledge. Hence, neither does the affirmed real priority mean anything more than factual priority in the sense of contingent temporality. As basic principle, however, it could only be verified with the completion of metaphysics, and at the same time it would lose its meaning through this completion.<sup>13</sup>

*Dualism of Agreements (adaequationes).* This is the dualism of the speculative and the absolute, namely, of an agreement of rules or basic principles of the examination of a possible true use of reason with rules of the possible true use of reason, and an agreement of true rules of a possible employment of reason on given objects of knowledge with realized, that is, employed, rules of true knowledge of objects. Since this dualism of both modes of agreement of reason, on the one hand, excludes their being united in an equally real relation of agreement, but, on the other, likewise does not permit a third independent and equally real agreement, the agreement of the intellect (*adaequatio intellectus*) cannot be given as principle of truth in the mode of a unitary agreement of reason with itself. Rather, this agreement is present here neither in the form of a highest unity nor in the mode of self-agreement with itself. Instead, there are two irreducible complementary modes of agreement, and indeed in both cases agreement in the form of an agreement of the diverse: not self-agreement, but agreement between one thing and another, namely, between the diverse aspects of rules or principles of the use of reason. Hence, the principle of truth of unitary agreement of

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12. Kant adds characteristically to his distinction between philosophy as critique and as metaphysics, "The title 'metaphysics' may also, however, be given to the whole of pure philosophy, inclusive of criticism, and so as comprehending the investigation of all that can ever be known *a priori* as well as the exposition of that which constitutes a system of the pure philosophical modes of knowledge of this type—in distinction, therefore, from all empirical and from all mathematical employment of reason" (*CPR*, A 841, B869).
13. Hegel's famous critique of transcendental-critical method in the introduction to the *Phenomenology of Mind* also upholds this interpretation [ trans. J. B. Baillie (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), Hereafter cited as *PM*]. See Werner Marx, *Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes. Die Bestimmung ihrer Idee in "Vorrede" und "Einleitung"* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1971), pp. 81ff.; or Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975).

reason with itself, in view of the methodological dualism of transcendental philosophy, does not have the character of a fulfilled reality but of a postulate of reason and of a task that reason poses for itself: reason ought to and intends to realize itself in a rational way, and the truth of reason first arises with the fulfillment of this demand, with the successful completion of this task.<sup>14</sup>

A demand, the posing of a task, however, presupposes a determinate material for its fulfillment. Thus one can speak here of universal material to which both complementary rational modes of procedure must be related: material for the critique of reason and material for metaphysics;<sup>15</sup> but one can speak especially of material for rational agreement and material agreements and material of law, material for forms of usage with respect to rules and material for rational modes of procedure such as proofs, grounds, demonstrations, conclusions, and recognitions. The unitary realization of reason in all these rational materials is a necessary condition for the possibility of the truths of reason.

The methodological dualism of the speculative and the absolute is true in itself and, insofar as it is, it represents a dualism of two exclusively valid modes of agreement of reason to which there is no third equally real mode. But it is also related to the dualism of the two complementary modes of rational procedure. Likewise in this respect, then, both the speculative and the absolute predicates have an exclusive validity: for the both given complementary modes of rational procedure, a rational agreement with itself can be realized only in one of the two ways, not in both ways at the same time and in the same measure. Transcendental philosophy is determined with respect to its methodical dualism in such a way that the truth of its critique of reason is defined as agreement between the rules of proof and the rules of the use of proven rules; and correspondingly, the truth of metaphysics as agreement between the rules of reason to be employed and those which have been employed: the critique of reason is speculative; metaphysics is absolute. According to this definition, any other determination of the mode of rational procedure by the predicates of speculative and

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14. Hegel's general critique of transcendental philosophy through subsumption under the category of Ought (*Sollens*) (in *Logic*, vol. 1, Book I, section 1, chap. 2) has various aspects: he criticizes the dualism of a "philosophy of finitude." But more important in our context is the criticism of contradiction in the determination of the relation of theoretical and practical reason contained in this subsumption, which, on the one hand is basically distinguished, and, on the other, is determined by a nonconceptual common form.

15. Accordingly, two universally valid concepts of *matter* are found in Kant: matter as that "which corresponds to perception" (*CPR*, A 20, B 34) as the matter-concept of critique; and matter as "the mobile, insofar as it can as such be an object of experience," (*Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaften*, A 138) as the matter-concept of metaphysics.

absolute contradicts the notion of transcendental method, or it refers to special, subordinate aspects of the method-process.

*Dualism of the Principles of Determination and Truth.* This is the dualism of self-relation or self-movement, in which a given entity is precisely determined as this or that and in which, through the identity of the relation, the given is considered determined as this or that; and self-agreement of reason with itself, through which the determinate given is held as true regarding its precise determination and its possible identification.<sup>16</sup> According to this dualism there is no other principle than these two; neither such that this duality might be joined in the unity of a principle of equal level, nor such that it relegates these to subordinate principles, nor in the mode of a principle operating independently and equally ranked next to these two. For the methodical dualism of transcendental philosophy, self-relation or self-movement is not present in the manner of a single highest and absolutely valid principle, which would be at one and the same time the principle of determination and the principle of truth; and if one speaks of other principles outside of these two basic principles, it is not of principles of an equal rank or independently ranked side by side. Forms, categories, schemata, and ideas, for example, serve as principles. But they are not as such of the same rank as the basic principles of determination and of truth. Rather, by reason of their respective subordination to the one or the other, they belong to a special and specifically limited region of reality and validity.

The methodical dualism of both basic principles directly points to a corresponding dualism of reality as governed by these principles. But this is to be distinguished from the previously mentioned dualism of matter. Both dualisms are concerned with data for the self-realization of reason. The dualism of matter represents a primary datum for this self-realization; the dualism of reality, however, its ultimately valid datum. In part it is relations, in part agreements that are primary data for reason: relations of the data as such, in part of a qualitative, in part of a quantitative sort, relations of a definite mass of relata; relations between data, sensations, and percep-

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16. This dualism does not come to light clearly in Kant's transcendental philosophy. On the one hand, all analytical judgments and all synthetic a priori judgments are universally and necessarily *true*. This truth, however, lies under the necessary condition of the determination of the linguistic formulation of corresponding propositions. In the same way, the determinate distinction between analytical judgments and synthetic a priori judgments presupposes the conditions of their determination. It would be naive to think that the way a proposition is verbally expressed provides a sufficient condition for such a distinction. In Kant's theory the determination of this distinction is based on the necessary presupposition of the "transcendental ideal," that is, of a possible system of real definitions. These definitions can also be considered as authentically true propositions that provide the truth of analytic and synthetic judgments with its necessary determination.

tions, between intuitions, concepts, and schemata, between archetypes and images; and, analogous to these relations, corresponding agreements; relations without specific agreements of their relata and agreements of special relations between relata; relations and agreements partly between like and partly between unlike, as for example the relations or agreement between sensations on the one hand and between sensations and perceptions on the other. To this dualism of relations and agreements in the primary givenness of material for reason corresponds a dualism with respect to the ultimately valid givenness of the reality of reason. Thus the result of this self-realization of reason, on the one hand, is determined in general and in detail by the principle of self-relation and, on the other hand, is true by the principle of self-agreement. The dualism of determination and truth is thus valid not only for the reality of reason on the whole; rather, each constituent of this reality is defined through its specific contribution to the determination and truth of the whole. This twofold functional definition gives to each element of rational reality a relational, derivative determination and truth with respect to the ultimately valid determination and truth of the whole. But at the same time there is a connection between this dualism of rational reality and the dualism of rational material in relation to the dualism of the principles of reason. Not only the elements of the ultimately valid givenness of reason, but also the elements of the primary material of reason must be defined with respect to the determination and truth of rational reality as a whole.<sup>17</sup> Thus these elements, namely the relations and adequations that comprise the given material of reason, likewise have a double function, and that indeed analogous to that of the elements of ultimate rational reality. And, correspondingly, there also belongs to them a derivative determination and truth, namely with respect to the determination and truth of the elements of the ultimately valid reality.

Both principal modes of rational agreement, the speculative and the absolute, are also governed by the dualism of the principles of determination and truth and thus are to be viewed on the one hand from the latter, on the other hand from the former standpoint. The precise concept of a transcendental philosophy attains, from the point of view of methodical dualism, a correspondingly precise coordination of both principles to the two given principal modes of rational procedure. Accordingly, the speculative critique of reason corresponds to the principle of determination,

17. Whitehead criticized Kant's notion of matter as erroneous on three counts: "1. The substance-quality doctrine of actuality. 2. the sensationalist doctrine of perception. 3. the doctrine of the objective world as a construct from subjective experience," (*Process and Reality* [ New York: Macmillan, 1929], pp. 237ff., hereafter cited as *PR*). But it is characteristic of Whitehead's assimilation of Kant that, owing to his differing concept of theory, he does not follow Kant's distinction of critique and metaphysics. In spite of this, Whitehead's criticism has force with respect to both above mentioned concepts of matter held in transcendental philosophy. See note 15.

the absolute metaphysics of rational knowledge to the principles of truth. But the problematic of this precise concept and the link, given with it, of the two basic complementary rational procedures lies in the possibility of the relation of those principles being reversed. We should not exclude by this notion these principles themselves or their subordinate principles, forms, or categories being subordinated in a reverse manner to the basic processes, so that next to the notion of transcendental philosophy a conceptual alternative appears: a transcendental philosophy with another notion of truth and with another notion of determination.

*The Dualism of the Two Basic or Elementary Processes.* This is the dualism between the singular process of transcendental reflection, and the universal process of transcendental method.<sup>18</sup> According to this dualism, equal and undiminishedly highest reality and concretion belong to these two basic processes in comparison with other possible processes and other rational data. Insofar as this is the case, there is no other equally concrete rational datum for both basic processes, in particular no other equally real process, so that the latter unites in itself or under itself the former elementary processes as its own subsidiary processes; also not in such a way that, next to the two others, a third equally concrete and real basic process develops independently and at the same level. Rather it is true of this dualism that all other processes are seen as subordinates that are integrated either in the one or the other of the two basic processes as special subsidiaries and, compared with these, possess a lesser concretion and reality.

For example, the process of thinking is to be treated in a transcendental-philosophical manner according to these different points of view. Accordingly this process is either the singular basic process of reflection or the universal process of method; or, if it is to be identified neither with the one nor the other, it belongs to the one or the other in a special subordinate role. As a determinate psychic event distinguished from comparable processes, the thought process is treated for the methodical dualism of transcendental philosophy not as a basic but as a particular process that participates in

18. It is this dualistic aspect which is least clear in Kant's transcendental philosophy. Singular reflection finds itself by way of suggestion in the highest point of transcendental philosophy, in transcendental apperception (*CPR*, "Transcendental Deduction of the Concepts of Pure Reason," paragraph 25, B 157) and in the theory of reflection in the critique of teleological judgment (*Critique of Judgment*, trans. J.H. Bernard, [ New York: Hafner, 1966] esp. paragraphs 64-67. Hereafter cited as *CJ*). The difference between singularity and universality is stressed in an especially sharp manner in the process theories of Leibniz and Whitehead. The monads or, respectively, the processes are *singularia* as ultimate entities. At the same time they are *universalia* as mirroring the cosmos. But the real dualism lies in the distinction between finite monads and the one Absolute Monad. Hegel, however, in his theory of individuality lets that difference apply only at the level of appearance of conscious experience.

some way in the dualism of reflection and method.<sup>19</sup> The processes of aesthetic production and the processes of the production of so-called art works are also to be subjected to a similar treatment. For these also determination of particularity and of participation in the dualism of reflection and method holds. This dualism of complementary basic processes includes their basic determinations of singularity and universality.

Particularity is no rational datum that comprises within itself or beneath itself in the mode of a highest concretion a given singularity and universality. Also, particularity is no third independent datum of equal concretion and reality as given singularity and universality. In comparison with the latter, it is necessarily given in the mode of relative abstractness. There is thus also no particular process that as basic, unites both elementary processes in itself or that enters as an independent third of equal concretion and reality beside the others. Particularly is thus either given in the form of determinate particular processes that are integrated into the one or the other of the two elementary basic processes as special subsidiaries; or it realizes itself in another categorial form, not as process, but as a nonprocessive datum in the form of a particular relation or agreement, of a particular theory or a particular proposition, and so on, which inheres in a special way in the one or the other of the given basic processes and their respective subsidiary processes.<sup>20</sup> The basic determinations of singularity and universality in which both basic complementary processes are distinguished, relate in their validity to their respective specific basic features, namely, 1) to the actual primary datum, the given rational material, 2) to the final and definitive resultant of the respective process, the actuality of reason, and 3) finally, to the respective process itself as the substantial basis of its own unity, thus to the process of the self-realization of reason as such. Correspondingly, the singular process of transcendental reflection and the universal process of transcendental method are distinguished in this threefold respect from one another.

## II. Actions as Singular Processes of Reflection<sup>21</sup>

The given material of the singular process of reflection represents a

19. For this reason, psychologism is an intrinsic problem for transcendental philosophy. R. Hönigswald has attempted to take consistent account of that in his *Denkpsychologie*. See especially the section on the concept and possibility of psychologism (Leipzig: Teubner, 1925), pp. 151 ff.
20. Whitehead speaks of the "ontological principle," thus of a single categorial type of entity, namely, the singular elementary processes (actual entity) to which ultimate actuality can be attributed (PR, p. 36). In contrast to this, Hegel's speculative process theory can accord the status of actuality only to the universal process of the absolute method of knowledge.
21. The classical process theories of Aristotle, Leibniz, Hegel, Bergson, and Whitehead could be considered under the premises of this parallel between processes of reflection and action as just so many different points of beginning of one formal theory of action.

singular rational datum. It thus consists in a singular datum. With respect to this datum, the singular process of reflection presents itself as a complex process of distinguishing and relating particular data. In this complex process various processive aspects or phases can be distinguished.<sup>22</sup> Each individual phase has, as a particular process, its own respective primary datum, its own specific resultant, and a single, proper, quasi-substantial basis of its unity.

So, to begin with, the singular process of reflection distinguishes (a) with respect to its given primary material, something in general and, further, a determination; and it relates these two particular data to the unity of a particular theoretical element. In this way it attains a first resultant, namely that of the determinate givenness of a theoretical element in specific contrast to the givenness of the primary singular datum. Compared with this primary datum, the resultant is a secondary datum, to which (b) the singular process of reflection now relates itself as to its primary datum in a process of identification and localization. Here the given theoretical element is identified from a determinate standpoint. This is the determinate standpoint of reflection with respect to its own processive unfolding. By means of this identification that theoretical element attains a definite position relative to the determinate standpoint of singular reflection. Here it is also a matter of a particular process of distinguishing and relating which is more or less clearly contrasted with the analogous subsidiary process (a) of the first phase of reflection. If a primary rational matter was pre-given there in the form of a singular datum, here the datum is the special contrast between the given theoretical element and that singular datum.<sup>23</sup> The theoretical element co-given in this contrast is distinguished, in the second phase of singular reflection, as this determinate something from its specific determination, and in respect to the datum of the first phase again, it is bound again to the unity of this particular element as such, which stands in specific contrast to that determinate datum. The difference between the two particular subsidiary processes of singular reflection is not only a difference of their respective primary data, but also a difference of their primary focus of attention. Thus in the first phase of reflection, attention is primarily directed toward the matter, to the singular datum, in order to distinguish in this respect something in general from a determination in general and in order in this respect to bind both of these data into the unity of a determinate theoretical element. In the second phase, reflective attention is directed primarily

22. All process theories at first distinguish three or four elementary "moments" or "phases" of development, insofar as something in process necessarily develops (a) as something, (b) from something, (c) into something, which may further develop (d) into something else. See Aristotle, *Physics*, E., 224b; Hegel, *Logic*, Vol. 2, Section 3, chap. 3; Whitehead, *PR*, p. 323.

23. In Whitehead's theory of elementary processes, contrasts constitute an important instrument for the analysis of intensities (*PR*, p. 33).

toward this theoretical element in its specific contrast to that singular datum. It is this element with respect to which "it itself" and "its" determination are distinguished in order to bind these two aspects of it into the unity of "it itself." It is only in the second place that attention is directed toward that singular datum of the first subsidiary process of reflection. Finally and above all, both subsidiary processes are distinguished with regard to their respective particular results. This distinction between the two subsidiary results has two aspects. First, these particular results are distinguished in the respective complexity of the contrast realized in them. Thus the contrast realized in the first phase is relatively simple compared with the contrast of the second phase, while the latter is relatively complex insofar as in this case it is a matter of the special contrast in relation to a contrast. However, this difference between the two subsidiary results has still another side. The resultant of the second subsidiary process is distinguished from that of the first, not simply in the specific givenness of a theoretical element, but in the specific givenness of an agreement of this element with itself—thus not in the specific givenness of a particular theory, but in the specific givenness of a particular truth, not in the givenness of a specific contrast between a particular theory and a singular datum, but in the givenness of a specific contrast between a particular truth and a given contrast.

The fact that truth cannot be already realized in the initial phase of a given process of reflection, but only in a later phase, corresponds to the familiar statement that there can be no simply immediate truth, that given truth rather always and necessarily stands under certain conditions. At the same time we see that the givenness of a truth does not mean the same thing as the givenness of a contrast, but that the former is indeed bound, as a mode of self-agreement, to a certain complexity of a given contrast, thus providing the transcendence of a certain minimum of distinctness.<sup>24</sup> But above all, this particular truth attained in the second phase of reflection stands under the necessary condition of the point of view taken by this particular reflection. Thus it is not only a particular truth with respect to a determinate datum, but also the truth of a particular theory that presents itself as the perspective givenness of a determinate datum. The latter is the third datum of the singular process of reflection which becomes in its third particular subsidiary process (c) a primary datum or an ingredient of such a datum. Here it is not simply the theoretical element, given in self-agreement with itself according to its two aspects, that is treated, attention being here directed primarily toward the conditions of its truth and their connection. Also, it is here a matter of an analogous process of distinguishing and relating, which is different from the two previous particular subsidiary pro-

24. For the concept of the logical minimum see H. Rickert, *Das Eine, die Einheit und die Eins* (Tübingen: C.B. Mohr/Paul Siebeck, 1924); W. Flach, *Negation und Andersheit. Ein Beitrag zur Problematik der Letztimplikation* (Munich/Basel: 1959).

cesses (a) and (b) with respect to its datum, its primary and secondary focus of attention, and its specific subsidiary result. The primary datum of this subsidiary process is the result of the immediately previous second subsidiary process; and, more particularly, this datum is given in contrast to the respective primary data of the previous phases of reflection, namely as particular perspectival truth in specific contrast to a contrast of contrasts. Compared with the various primary data of the previous phases, this datum again shows a higher complexity in its realized contrast. This time the primary focus of attention is not directed toward the singular datum as in the first phase of singular reflection; also not, as in the second phase, to the theoretical element which plays a decisive role in all the phases of reflection. There can be no reflection without a theoretical minimum, that is, without at least a theoretical element that is given in a minimal contrast. Rather, attention is directed primarily toward its own respective standpoint of reflection in its various particular phases, and only in the second place to those data initially given attention in the previous phases. Thus reflection here distinguishes in its third phase the standpoint taken up in the second from the standpoint of its beginning phase, and this in the mode of the determinate distinction of two different loci that are viewed together in the unity of a specific relative position. This distinction of two loci objectifies in a certain way the distinction of the subjective perspectives in which the data of the two previous phases have presented themselves and accordingly, in the unitary relative position of the two given loci of reflection, it is a matter of the objectification of the unitary perspectival contrast in which the connection of the various modes of givenness of the data presents itself in the various phases of reflection.<sup>25</sup> But the distinction of the two different loci in their positions in relation to one another stands under a determinate condition, namely that of the determinate standpoint which reflection takes in this third phase of its singular process. Thus both given loci of reflection present themselves in their determinate position in relation to one another in a specific perspective. Accordingly, presented here above all, is the specific contrast between an objectified perspectival contrast and a subjective perspective. Thus here it is a matter not only of the complexity of contrasts, but also of the complexity of perspectivity. What has been previously said *in abstracto* of the relation of truth and contrast also holds with respect to their perspectival givenness: perspectival truth does not have the same significance as perspectival contrast; but it presupposes such a contrast with respect to the givenness of distinguishable standpoints of particular reflections in a unified singular process.

But the reverse also holds true here: since the third particular subsidiary

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25. G. Boehm, "Die Dialektik der ästhetischen Grenze," *Neue Hefte für Philosophie* 5 (1975): 118ff, makes a special contribution to a theory of the loci of singular reflection in the realm of aesthetic value.

process as such and in its result presupposes the other particular subsidiary processes with their specific resultants, accordingly the self-agreement of the theoretical element given in reflection, and hence truth, is especially presupposed, whenever there is distinction between both determinate loci in their specific positions relative to one another. In relation to this third subsidiary process it becomes clear that truth is not unconditionally and from every standpoint the ultimate goal of reflection.<sup>26</sup> Against the truth attained in the second phase, the most proximate goal of the third particular process of reflection is not a new truth, but the determination of the truth reached once before by determining its specific conditions. The dualism of determinateness and truth I have discussed previously necessarily presents itself in a different way from every particular standpoint of reflection. Singular reflection as such has a double base and faces in two directions.<sup>27</sup> It is on the one hand directed backward toward its pre-given rational material and forward to a determinate realization of reason. Its development from a singular datum to a singular resultant is situated with reference to this simple distinction of directions. Each particular subsidiary process with its particular datum and its particular result corresponds in a specific way to this universal double-turn and double-orientation, and this is through a respective determinate focus of attention, through emphasis of this focus above the others and through a more or less emphasized change of the focus once adopted. Thus the focus first emphasized in the third phase of reflection concerns the respective standpoints taken previously and the second focus first concerns the various points of view of the previous phases. If the former join in the unity of a contrast of loci, the latter unite into the unity of a contrast between primary and secondary points of view. The result of the third particular subsidiary process of reflection can be described accordingly as perspectival givenness of the determinate position of two diverse loci in contrast to a contrast of primary and secondary points of view; or also as perspectival givenness of a contrast of objectivized standpoints in specific contrast to a contrast of objectivized points of view. Thus the third phase of reflection distinguishes two different loci, given in their unitary relative positions with respect to diverse particular points of view and their data. Perspectival givennesses are not only to be distinguished with respect to the

26. It is the principle of relevance that binds together the diverging principles of truth and determination. See especially the work of A. Schütz, *Das Problem der Relevanz* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971); or *Reflections on the Problem of Relevance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970). See also R. Grathoff, "Ansätze zu einer Theorie sozialen Handels bei A. Schütz" in *Neue Hefte für Philosophie* 9 (1976). Whitehead's universal theory of relevance in *PR* is based on completely different theoretical presuppositions.

27. Hegel characterizes this fundamental double basis first as appearance in order to develop it further by means of the distinction between *Schein* and *Erscheinung*. This conceptual development in the so-called *Wesenslogik* can be read as a general theory of discursiveness.

difference of subjectivity and objectivity, but also with respect to the difference of standpoint and point of view.

One speaks of an *objective* perspective when a subjective datum is objectified in a definite way; of a *real* perspective if a subjective standpoint is objectified; and finally of an *ideal* perspective if it is a matter of the determinate objectification of a subjective viewpoint. The result, rich in contrast, of the third particular process of reflection thus becomes a primary datum for a fourth particular subsidiary process (d) of singular reflection, and this is again in a specific contrast to the given contrasts of the primary data of the previous phases of reflection. This subsidiary process, analogous to the previous one, is a process of discrimination and bringing into relation with respect to a specific datum, a specific complex point of view and with reference to the specific result of a determinate standpoint. Its specific datum is distinguished from the previous particular data in a way analogous to the way the latter are distinguished from their predecessors, by the greater complexity of the contrast realized in them, and above all by the specific perspective of the standpoint that reflection takes in this phase. Thus the specific contrast of the previous phase between a contrast of standpoints and a contrast of points of view is here given in a modified perspective. To this modification corresponds a modified ideal and real perspective. Thus this fourth subsidiary process is distinguished from the immediately previous third through the stronger emphasis of the secondary view over this primary, or if you will, by a change of the primary focus of attention. This primary focus is directed not so much as before toward its own standpoint, but rather to its own point of view. Thus here it is a matter of the stronger emphasis of the ideal over the real perspective, or rather of a change from the latter to the former perspectival givenness. Reflection here does not primarily distinguish a first and a second standpoint in relation to certain particular data, points of view, and results. Rather, here its attention is directed primarily toward the given points of view of the previous standpoints in order to distinguish them, with respect to their importance, their specific emphasis, as primary and secondary points of view. It is through this difference in assessing relative importance, in evaluation and the "hierarchical minimum" of variously valued aspects given thereby that ideal perspectives are distinguished in general from real perspectives. Singular reflection cannot directly alter the given consequence of its particular standpoints as such. If it could, it would not be this singular reflection. Its specific view of its own peculiar standpoint is necessarily involved with the condition of the determinate consequences of these particular standpoints. Reflection is not, however, completely bound by the previous points of view. The singular process of reflection, treated as a process of the appropriation of the previous respective standpoints in the following phases of its development, when abstracted from the specific points of view of those standpoints, is reduced to an exterior event. The exterior event to which the process of

reflection is reduced in such abstraction is then also only subdivided in an exterior way into various phases, and every appropriation of a standpoint is then equal in meaning to the determinate level of a later phase relative to an earlier. But what distinguishes the singular process of reflection from an individual exterior event is the internal character of reflection, consisting basically of a specific appropriation of the points of view of the previous standpoints.<sup>28</sup>

One can speak meaningfully of an appropriation of standpoints only with respect to their points of view. The same holds true for speaking of the "maintaining of a standpoint." The maintaining of a standpoint, once taken up, requires the maintaining of the point of view presented from this standpoint, and includes specifically taking a position toward it, and this in such a manner that the latter comes to be expressed in the way in which the standpoint is held. Accordingly, with respect to the fourth particular subsidiary process (d) of singular reflection, two subordinate processes (d1) and (d2) are to be distinguished, whose difference relates to the respective specific appropriation of the points of view of the previous phases and of which the one (d1) precedes the other (d2) as its condition. This first (d1) of the two subordinate processes of reflection in the fourth phase (d) of its process is characterized by the fact that it primarily follows the emphasis or evaluations of the points of view on the standpoints of the previous phases. Thus reflection first distinguishes here the primary points of view of the previous phases and then secondarily their secondary aspects; and it correspondingly emphasizes the bond of those primary points of view more strongly than the bond of the secondary aspects. Thus the distinction and unity of the primary datum in the first phase and of the theoretical element in the second phase are here more strongly emphasized than the distinction and unity of the particular givenness of that datum in the second phase and of that theoretical element in the first phase. The result of the first subsidiary process of the fourth phase of reflection can accordingly be described as perspectival givenness of the specific contrast between the primary and secondary points of view of the given standpoints in contrast to these standpoints, or as perspectival givenness of two distinguishably weighted particular data that are distinguished with respect to the two places located with respect to one another in a definite way. This result and the other results of the previous subsidiary processes of reflection presupposes the basic nonidentity of standpoint and point of view. If now in this beginning fourth phase (d1) of reflection, the ideal perspective is emphasized more strongly than in the immediately previous phase—one can here speak even of a change of perspective from the real to the ideal—then such a change of perspective is to be distinguished from a mere change of focus. Rather, one

28. Fichte speaks of the "activity into which an eye is set." For this graphic formulation see D. Henrich, "Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht," sec. IV, p. 206.

might speak of the first as an alteration or a change of the change of focus. Here attention does not shift from the two given loci to both given particular data, as in the third phase, but from the latter to the former. However, this change of the focus of attention is neither a simple nor merely a twofold shift, as in the cases where attention is directed from one determinate locus to another and back again, or from one particular datum to another and from the latter again to the former. In the ideal perspective, attention is different from that in the real perspective; not at all being directed primarily toward the latter givenness and secondarily to the former. Rather, attention is here directed above all toward the specific emphases of the given foci of attention.

In the earlier phases, reflection immediately followed the consequence of the standpoint in the pursuit of its points of view. Thus on the basis of the primacy of the first standpoint over the second, a secondary viewpoint on the first standpoint must necessarily have priority over a primary viewpoint on the secondary standpoint. In the incipient fourth phase, reflection frees itself from this strong connection of the consequence of the points of view to the consequence of the given standpoints, in that it now primarily follows the emphases of the points of view on the standpoints once taken up. The appropriation of these emphases and weightings thus in a certain respect is a deviation from the given. It contains its own taking of a position in that it fortifies a given emphasis, affirms a present evaluation. This tendency in the development of the fourth subsidiary process (d) of reflection reinforces itself in its second subordinate process (d2). Here the relative independence from the various ways of being bound by the pre-given standpoints is increased and the relative self-sufficiency in taking a position toward the data explicitly emphasized. Here reflection is removed not only from its strict connection with the consequences of the points of view presented by the present standpoints, but also further distances itself from the specific emphasis of these points of view on the various respective standpoints. In this progressive fourth phase (d2) of its development, singular reflection emphasizes and weighs the previous points of view anew.<sup>29</sup> Thus in a certain respect this is a phase of the "transvaluation of all values." To be sure, this primary transvaluation is minimal. For the order of values to which it applies

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29. In modern process theories—in Nietzsche, Bergson, and Whitehead—the basic affinity of perspectivity and creativity plays a fundamental role. Among certain systematic presuppositions, one can distinguish the general and particular conceptions characteristic of this approach. Thus in a certain respect each singular process of reflection is "creative" as *causa sui*. However, one must speak above all of creativity with respect to the particular positions taken, evaluations made, and especially the transvaluation of given values. See Whitehead's distinction between the categories of "conceptual valuation" and "conceptual reversion," *PR*, p. 40.

represents for its part a hierarchical minimum in the form of a determinate contrast of primary and secondary points of view on distinguishable standpoints. Opposed to the consequence of points of view primordially cogiven through the sequence of these standpoints, but also opposed to the primordial evaluation of these points of view on the present standpoints, here by transvaluation the primary points of view appear as secondary and the secondary as primary. A transvaluation necessarily presupposes a given primary valuation. Thus the beginning phase (d1) of reflection forms a necessary presupposition of its further development to such a particular subsidiary process of minimal transvaluation. Both results of these subordinate processes of reflection in their fourth phase are bound for their part to a primary datum, which in specific contrast to the primary data of the previous subsidiary processes constitutes the specific datum of a further particular process of reflection. This new primary datum is distinguished from the primary data of the previous phases in a way similar to how these data are distinguished from those previous with respect to the contrasts realized in them. These contrasts and their differences have their quantitative and qualitative aspects. The contrasts of the data in question distinguish themselves in a quantitative respect by their specific complexity, and also in a qualitative respect. Thus in the previous phases it is partly a matter of various points of view, partly various emphases of these points of view contrasting in a primary way, partly because of the contrasts of points of view contrasting with the contrasts of their various emphases, that is, with the contrast of their primary and secondary evaluations. Here, finally, in the result of the fourth particular process of reflection, two given contrasts of valuation, two contrasts of the given primary and secondary points of view, are contrasted primarily in such a way that the accents of the same points of view are distinguishably established in both.<sup>30</sup>

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30 This analysis of process is incomplete in two ways. First it is limited to the elementary data of such processes; further, it abstracts from the specific givenness of the multiplicity of the processes of reflection which is given to a self-unfolding process of reflection as its datum. Under the condition of this abstraction, the result of reflection appears one-sided in the form of the increasing complexity of contrasts. Accordingly, the analysis would have to be completed by a description of the functions which the system-theorists thematize in the phrase "reduction of complexity." See N. Luhmann, "Moderne Systemtheorien als Form gesamtgesellschaftlicher Analyse," and "Sinn als Grundbegriff der Soziologie," in J. Habermas and N. Luhmann, *Theorie der Gesellschaft oder Social-Technologie* (Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1971). This attempt, however, lacks the means for determining the degrees of complexity. Also, the analogy to biological systems upon which the use of the system-concept in social theory rests remains unclear. Whitehead had presented in 1929 a sketch for a theory of biological systems in the chapter "Organisms and Environment" in *PR*.

### III Teleological Contexts<sup>31</sup>

#### Adaptation and Perfection

The singular process of reflection is not immediately a causal or a teleological process. But it would be incorrect to deny it any affinity to causality and teleology and to view it as indifferent. Causality and teleology have their specific value in the realm of the appearance of a relation between the total process and its real and ideal subsidiary processes.<sup>32</sup> The singular process of reflection appears as a process of self-causation or rather of self-grounding. Thus it provides (1) the unitary total appearance of such a process with respect to the totality of all its real and ideal subsidiary processes, the appearance of a process that exists in itself and can be understood from itself.<sup>33</sup> As such a cause, as ground of itself, the singular reflection-process inheres in the totality of all its real and ideal subsidiary processes in a specific way and represents a specific synthesis of this totality. Specific inherence and specific synthesis with respect to the totality of all its partial appearances constitute, from this point of view, the two basic features of the proper causality of singular reflection. If one were to abstract from these basic features, one would reduce that totality to a mere multiplicity of data. However, beyond such an appearance of self-causality, (2) the singular process of reflection appears in each particular aspect of its real and ideal subsidiary processes in ever-specific ways. From this point of view, the real and ideal subsidiary processes are specific representations or manifestations of the total unitary process of reflection. As such, they are particular processes of grounding and causality that must relate to the singular process of reflection as a total unitary appearance. This multiplicity of specific proper

31. N. Luhmann rightly indicates that the means-purpose schema is unsatisfactory for interpreting the complex teleological context of an action. See *Zweckbegriff und Systemrationalität* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973).

32. The classical philosophical theories of knowledge interpret the basic knowledge functions of abstraction, perception, and imagination as part real, part ideal subsidiary processes of reflection and can accordingly be classified as realistic and idealistic theories. Still this classification can in no case be maintained with absolute strictness, especially with reference to the function of abstraction. In any case, such a classification presupposes that a difference has been established between real and ideal subsidiary processes with respect to the process of reflection in question. The functions of knowledge mentioned are thus to be investigated primarily on the strength of whether and in what way they contribute to the constitution of this difference and to what extent they are to be interpreted one way or another on the basis of this constitution. Bergson's great work in the theory of knowledge, *Matter and Memory* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959), can be read from this point of view.

33. See the well-known definitions of *causa sui* and substance given at the beginning of Spinoza's ethics, which play an authoritative role in the classical theories of action in the rationalist tradition.

representations and manifestations in the proper real and ideal subsidiary processes must be bound into the unity of a total unified appearance. Also from this second point of view the singular process of reflection provides the total unified appearance of a process of self-grounding and self-causality. To be sure, this appearance of singular reflection is distinguished from the previously mentioned total unified appearance of specific inherence in the given totality of particular appearances and the specific synthesis of this totality. For the total unitary appearance relates here, not, as there, to the totality of the real and ideal proper constituents, but to these single processive constituents themselves as specific self-representations and manifestations of singular reflection. This modified appearance of the reflection-process of self-grounding and self-causality (*causa sui*) is that of the teleological process.<sup>34</sup> This process not only binds a given totality by its inherence and synthesis, but also binds together a given manifold of grounding and causal processes that, abstracted from the unitary total appearance of the teleological process, splits into a mass of individual components of the given causal and grounding processes: into forms and contents, grounds and consequents, causes and effects. The teleological process is, considered in itself, as its expression signifies, a process of the development of a determinate goal and purpose, and this is of a determinate total unified goal and purpose for the particular grounding and causal processes of singular reflection. Thus in the teleological process an initial goal is at first given, with a tendency toward its proper realization. This goal, however, stands under the conditions of this determinate realization and is on this account forced to adapt itself to its course and development and to alter itself accordingly. It is at the end of this development that it first will have attained the function of a determinate conclusive total goal which in the singular process of reflection has the status of being realized.<sup>35</sup> This movement or development of the initially given goal thus necessarily belongs to the total appearance of the singular process of reflection.

An action is to be considered in a certain respect as a singular process of reflection. Thus it is a false prejudice to think that the inability of intention and purpose to be altered necessarily and universally belongs to the essence of an action. In reality, however, a real activity is embedded in a self-altering world. It meets up with a world conceived in alteration, and makes its own proper contribution to its external alterations, with respect to which it considers this world as its own world. However, in this way it cannot re-

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34. W. Bartuschat investigates the systematic connection of reflection and teleology with special regard to Kant's transcendental philosophy, in *Zum systematischen Ort von Kants Kritik der Urteilskraft* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1972).

35. Kant, *CJ*, paragraph 66, and Hegel, *Logic*, Vol. 2, section 2, chap. 3, accordingly affirm an instantaneous interchangeability of all constitutive elements of a teleological context based upon its coherence.

main entirely unmoved in its own development in relation to the external changes already on the scene and those effected by it. It must take into consideration in one way or another in its own internal development the noticed external changes. If a real action should find it possible to actualize itself in external reality, it must in some way adapt to the changes in this reality. Only under the condition of such adaptation on its own part can action so surpass the natural alterations of reality always found in process that it can rightly be considered the cause of the observed alteration. An action is more than a mere adaptation process and is to be distinguished from it, but it must contain adaptation in itself as a special activity.

Thus there are actions whose initial goal is modified in agreement with noticed external alterations, while at the same time a determinate universal intention remains unchanged and in contrast to those alterations. On the other hand, actions can frequently be found in whose course a once apprehended goal remains unchanged, while at the same time, deliberately or not, there is an alteration of the universal motive for action. The connection between alterations and the constancy of intent and goal within the whole action is in both cases of a teleological sort. Accordingly, in the one case one can say that the initial goal must necessarily be modified because of the observed external changes and the given universal intention in order to be able to attain that intention not only in general, but also in agreement with the observed changes. In the other case it must be asserted that the alteration of external reality must necessarily make itself manifest in the alteration of the intent of the action, since it must make itself manifest somewhere within the action and since it cannot for this or that reason effect an alteration of the once established goal. An analogous teleological context also exists where an action allows in two ways the condition of its adaptation to the reality that is altering itself, namely through change of intent and through change of the goal. Such an action can assert that the alteration of one aspect of the action, apart from alteration of the other complementary aspects, is of itself not sufficient to remain in constant touch with a world incessantly altering itself and thus to be able to realize itself in it; that rather a change in one moment of action must be linked together with a change in the other moments and this in agreement with a world analogously altering itself. This is necessary first in order to avoid an internal conflict of action with itself between adjustment and nonconformity, and second, in order to shape the interchange with external reality in the most effective manner possible. Matters are entirely different in the other extreme case of action in whose course not only an initial universal intention, but also an initial special goal is held unchanged, in contrast to a world that is altering itself more or less substantially. For the sake of such a "rigorous" action the same arguments can be offered as for those actions the moments of which do not as a whole change; namely that in the given world of an action it cannot be the case that simply everything changes; that stable elements of order must

be given in that world in the form of rules and laws of change as such, as well as rules of relation between various regulated changes.<sup>36</sup> Besides, one can say that it is certainly not the nature of action to lose itself in the reality of its own world by complete adjustment, or to duplicate this world in quite unspecified ways. An action is rather appointed to change something in its world that does not and could not change itself by itself. On the other hand, such a rigorous action which more or less rejects the condition of a necessary adjustment affords the risk of miscarriage to a great degree. For by such a rejection either it attains no contact with its own world from the very beginning, or it loses this direct touch in the course of its own development and in some way deprives itself of the possibility of becoming directly effective in a world.<sup>37</sup>

Now, to be sure, the task of self-actualization which each singular action resolves in ever-specific ways is complex in itself and consists of a plethora of individual tasks that must be coordinated with each other. The task of adjusting one's own development to the development of an exterior world is not the only task for an action, even if it is of great importance as a necessary presupposition for maintaining one's own nonconformity. In general an action must pay heed to creating and maintaining presuppositions favorable to its own success. Among the individual subsidiary tasks of a single action the following are especially to be noted: establishment and development of a specific goal for oneself in agreement with an initial general intent, discovery of the right means for the purpose set for oneself, and provisional, revisable self-development in the realization of these means; further, spontaneous or gradual adjustment of the general intent and the special goal to one another in view of a self-altering reality, conscious or unconscious regulation and control of the relation between this self-altering reality and one's own progress, self-feeling, perception, and self-knowledge, evaluation of this or that aspect of the action; further, the disclosure of possibilities of one's passing on to other actions and thus the generation of possible relatively general subjects of action, which make possible identification and distancing.<sup>38</sup> One must speak of the success of an action, as well as of its failure or miscarriage, not only in general, not only with respect to its self-development as such, but also with respect to its individual subsidiary tasks.

36. According to this analysis, rigorousness in no way applies only to the special case of moral behavior (the unconditioned observance of moral law), but characterizes a specific rule-governed behavior formed in consideration of a specific relation to reality. Legal and technological behavior can also be rigorous in the sense described and still admit in itself the risk of failure. Thus it is possible that the rigorous use of the so-called rules of prudence can be shown to be imprudent.

37. See Hegel's unique presentation of this possibility under the suggestive title, "Virtue and the Course of the World" (in *Phen.*, "The Realization of Rational Self-Consciousness through Itself").

38. Here one takes the methodical path from action to the possible subjects of ac-

To be sure, the success of a singular action is not dependent upon the satisfactory discharge in the same way of all individual subsidiary tasks; also, an action is not to be viewed as miscarried already because it could have found a better answer to this or that partial problem within its response to the total problem. In analogy to the elementary singular process of reflection, it is true of singular actions that they always have their determinate limits, as it were, an indicator of their finitude and of the finitude of the subjects of action belonging to them. The finitude of an action has its negative and positive side.<sup>39</sup> Negatively considered, this finitude is equal to the impossibility of attaining perfection in every individual discharge of all the particular subsidiary tasks. Such total perfection represents a false and misleading ideal; and the singular action that appropriates this ideal as its motive essentially reduces the chances of its success. The positive character of finitude is the independence of the self-realization of an action from the compulsion to achieve a total perfection, in that an action on the whole can attain a relative perfection without thereby having to achieve perfection in the realization of every individual goal.<sup>40</sup>

This freedom from the compulsion toward total perfection, this fact that an action has at its disposal a certain latitude for the discriminate weighing of the individual tasks undertaken, belongs to the conditions of the possibility of its continuance in other actions. The possibility of linking one or more singular actions into the unity of another singular action rests upon this freedom for deficient perfection, of which every individual action makes use in its own way. Thus it can happen that the external efficiency in the self-realization of a singular action occurs at the cost of its inner self-agreement in that the general intent and the special goal of action prove to be in contradiction with one another at some point of the course of action. In this

tion, not least with critical intent regarding a naive and uncritical positing of subjects of action. From this point of view, poetics, especially drama theory, has a special significance for a theory of action. See the contribution to the Bochumer Colloquium *Dramentheorie-Handlungstheorie* (1975) by H. Flashar, R. Kannicht, and K. Stierle; also see R. Wiehl, "Über den Handlungsbegriff als Kategorie der Hegelschen Ästhetik," in *Hegel-Studien*, 6, 1971, pp. 135ff.

39. Heidegger's key philosophical expression of the finitude of man, developed from Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, proves true for Kant's practical philosophy insofar as, according to Kant, man is capable of morality relatively independent of the state of his knowing.

40. Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* criticizes not only the ideal of a perfect speech action and of the perfect action of the "ideal description of the world," but also the ideal of an absolute perfection of actions. An interpretation of Wittgenstein's work regarding action theory can be found in Kuno Lorenz. As I see it, however, in the one-sidedness of a transcendental philosophy, which is metaphysics in linguistic analytical employment, that is, the ultimate elements of which are linguistic entities [ see *Elemente der Sprachkritik*, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970); this title is, with respect to the dualism of critique and metaphysics, peculiarly ambiguous.]

case the inner harmony and self-agreement of action with respect to the general intent and special goal remains an open task the fulfillment of which must necessarily remain reserved to another action. This other action must be one that appropriates the specific transmission of self-realization and the task of self-agreement, thereby passed on and remaining unfulfilled, in order that these may become its general intent or its special goal. In this way a teleological connection and continuity becomes possible between the given singular action and a specific tradition binding for it, which here consists in the transmission of another finite, singular action. Or in another case a finite singular action succeeds in establishing and maintaining a relatively perfect self-agreement, an adjustment of general intent and special goal to one another, and thus an inner peace—this to be sure, only at the cost of external efficiency in its own world. This efficiency must in this way remain reserved to another action in an analogous world. This other action must strive to continue that specific tradition of self-appeasement and self-agreement in its own world in an analogous way and with the general intent or with the special goal of external efficiency. Every finite singular action takes over as its datum a specific multiplicity of individual tasks.<sup>41</sup> At the same time, however, it creates specific possibilities of its own transmission through the tradition of a multiplicity of unfulfilled or imperfectly fulfilled tasks. An action that has discharged every task which is at all conceivable for it in an absolutely perfect way cannot create from itself alone such possibilities of its own transmission. Insofar as it itself derives from a determinate tradition, moreover, it will establish the conclusion of this tradition, at least partially. This conclusion, to be sure, must not be unconditionally final, but may have a quite provisional character, for when in the case of such an action it first appears that all has been done that could and must be done, quite new circumstances may arise where the action's once completed perfection no longer provides satisfaction. In this connection, however, one must in general distinguish between actions that have already begun and are in process, and actions that have already found their definite conclusion in a final, or at least provisionally final, result.

### Practical Judgments as Elements of Action

The distinction between complete and incomplete actions as well as between provisionally and conclusively complete actions plays an extremely important role in the evaluation and assessment of such actions with respect to their possible perfection. Already during their course, many actions allow one to become aware of or to recognize in other ways whether or not they will perfectly succeed, remain incomplete, or even ultimately fail. Such an awareness of its own fate, such an ominous anticipation of itself, accom-

41. On the relation between purposes and problems see N. Luhmann, *Zweckbegriff und Systemrationalität*, pp. 311ff.

panies every action in progress. Emotions and other similar modes of awareness are, however, more than merely phenomena that accompany actions. They are, as it were, interpreters and commentators<sup>42</sup> on the course of action and in a certain respect also elementary prognoses of the action. In certain circumstances emotions have such a prognostic character. Hope and resignation are especially striking phenomena that frequently accompany actions, with a content that is part descriptive, part prognostic. But as a rule, a final evaluation of the perfection of an action is first possible at its conclusion and by special attention to its concluding result. Emotions and other similar modes of awareness that accompany the course of action have another function and significance in relation to the concluded action. Satisfaction at the end of an action does not have the same prognostic content that it has at the beginning and during the course of action, but rather contributes to the confirmation of an initial hope. Dissatisfaction and disillusionment refute initial expectations in the form of emotions. First at the end of a concluded action and with special attention being paid to its concluding result, it can be established, at least provisionally, whether all was done that could and must be done, or whether something could and must have been done better and thus on another occasion should be done in a better way. The possibility of its own transmission is given with the notion of an action as such. This possibility exists not only for finite actions in their characteristic freedom for deficient perfection, but also for those actions which can be termed, in contrast to these, infinite, insofar as they possess the capacity for absolute perfection, that is, insofar as they can completely discharge in a perfect way all individual subsidiary tasks which merge toward the total task that has been set, and do so in complete agreement with a perfect solution of the total problem that they find.<sup>43</sup>

With respect to this possible transmission by actions in both infinite and finite tasks, one can distinguish different aspects: actions are infinite (1) with respect to their capacity and disposition toward absolute perfection in the sense indicated; (2) as singular processes in which that disposition realizes itself in a perfect way; (3) as absolute processes whose complete

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42. On the interpretative function of emotions, especially in dialogical action, see R. Wiehl, "Dialog und philosophische Reflexion," in *Neue Hefte für Philosophie* 2/3 (1972): pp. 43ff.

43. The hermeneutic theory of H. G. Gadamer critically regards the classical notion of action in a series of principles, such as the transmission event of effective historical consciousness and in the critique of the philosophy of reflection. One must investigate how far this critique concerns the notion of action as such or only the immediate givenness of actions. It cannot always be deduced from the topic "Pregrasp of Perfection" that the transmission of infinite actions are exclusive objects of interpretation. Rather, the explication of such a pregrasp consists of a complex context of practical judgments among which judgments of finitude, in the sense here described, play a distinguished role. See *Truth and Method*, pp. 261ff., 305ff.

realization is owed, not to a contingent external cause, but to the respective process of action itself, and that must thus develop itself freely and from an inner necessity; and (4) as unconditioned processes that basically are to be thought of as incapable of being finished, for which accordingly the disjunction between completion and incompletion holds unconditionally; so that for every provisional completion, a new transmission proper to it must be considered. Various transmissions of infinite actions can be distinguished with respect to which aspect of their infinity is especially emphasized over the others. These various traditions are conditions of the possibility of different judgments of perfection. Thus, for instance, with respect to the initially given disposition of an infinite action and its process of development, the following judgment is possible: all will be done that can and must be done. In this judgment a prognosis and a promise are joined to form a undivided unity. Or, for instance, in regard to the developing process of the infinite action, the following judgment can be made: presently all is being done that there is to do. This also is a judgment of perfection, in which several items coalesce: the determination of a present state of affairs, the assumption of responsibility for a given or not-given promise, and the task of a declaration of guarantee for the confirmation of a prognosis. Finally, a judgment of perfection is also possible in view of the concluded transmission of an infinite action, namely, the judgment that all has been done that could and had to be done. In this judgment one finds the following blended into a unity: the determination of a completed state of affairs, the vindication of the infinite action, the confirmation of the observance of a given promise, and the proof of an initial prognosis. Also, statements about "one's own responsibility" and claims that on every other occasion and in the same circumstances it is precisely this alone that could and must have been done that is here and now being done, are to be considered judgments of perfection under certain limited conditions.

Finite actions also display different aspects regarding their possible transmission. Thus an action is determined as finite (1) according to its incapacity and indisposition to an absolute completion, as it belongs to infinite action, or according to its capacity and disposition to a relative completion. Further an action is finite (2) as a singular process, in which the disposition to such a relative completion realizes itself in a relatively complete manner. This can occur in various ways: such that all individual subsidiary tasks that present themselves within the region of the total task are discharged in a similarly imperfect manner, and that for each individual subsidiary discharge a better can be imagined, notwithstanding that the total result turns out satisfactorily and is judged to be relatively perfect; or such that not all individual subsidiary tasks can be discharged collectively, and that among these is at least one, perhaps more than one, that is not discharged, even imperfectly. In this case the relatively satisfactory total discharge occurs at the cost of the discharge of one or a few subsidiary tasks.

Here the success of the finite action is bought not only at the cost of a certain neglect of detail in the assigned task, but also at the cost of a partial failure or miscarriage. Finally, a finite action can also still on the whole succeed if one or a few subsidiary tasks cannot be achieved and the remaining can be discharged only in a relatively imperfect way. Further, an action is finite (3) as a contingent process that does not attain its relative completion in an absolutely free manner and from an unconditioned inner necessity, but only under the condition of contingent external causes; and finally, (4) as a conditioned process. As such, a finite action is distinguished from an infinite action, which stands as an absolute and unconditioned process above all because it is represented as basically capable of being completed. Each specific appearance of a finite action as an unfinished process will thus necessarily be provisional and represent no complete appearance, and vice versa, the appearance of an infinite action as a completed process is a provisional appearance that stands under specific conditions of a contingent tradition. In contrast to this is the unfinished appearance of the finite action which points to a specific transmission as its condition. Finite actions stand, as do the infinite, in specific transmissions which transmit from them an ever-specific appearance. The latter can be distinguished according to which determinate aspects and features are expressed in them. Analogous to the transmissions of infinite actions, these transmissions also function as conditions of possibility for determinate judgments which, in distinction from those judgments of completion, should be termed judgments of finitude.<sup>44</sup>

Judgments of finitude can be treated from different points of view and be distinguished from judgments of completion. Thus they are characterized (a) by the fact that they somehow take account of the relativity of the completion peculiar to finite action, be it because they emphasize the incompleteness in its relative completeness and thus point to its limits in comparison to a pure and absolute completion, or be it that in the imperfection in question they emphasize a certain relative completion and thus evoke an affinity to absolute perfection. Like judgments of completion, judgments of finitude could be referred to as incipient actions, to those currently in progress, and to those concluded. Such a judgment of finitude regarding an action under way might be: "Not all that should be done can be done." Here a judgment occurs on the limits of ability, the limits of the power of finite ac-

44. Complex combinations of practical judgments form the presupposition for ideal-typical constructions of action complexes. Max Weber's reference to the function of fantasy and to the criterion of success in the choice between the pure play of thought and the scientifically fruitful formation of concepts, understood as a theoretical base, is not very satisfying; See "Die Objektivität sozial-wissenschaftlicher und sozialpolitischer Erkenntnis," in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, 3rd ed. (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr/Paul Siebeck, 1968), pp. 192f. Practical propositions require specific relations to theories of reflection in order to be methodically useful.

tion. But this judgment only expresses one aspect of the incompleteness of finite action. The other is formulated by a complementary judgment that perhaps can be stated thus: "Not everything that could be done will have to be done." Here it is not a lack, an incapacity, but on the contrary an excess of ability and power that is expressed. Both these aspects, formulated in complementary judgments of finitude, belong to a finite action. Analogous judgments can also be formulated about actions currently in progress or ones that have reached completion. Thus for instance, in respect to a determinate finite action that has reached its conclusion, the judgment might be formulated: "Nothing more was to be done," or in another formulation: "That was all that there was to do." In both formulations the judgment of finitude in question here indeed shows a characteristic ambiguity as to the difference between impossibility and non-necessity. Thus for this judgment of finitude in its specific ambiguity, two relatively unambiguous complementary judgments can be drawn, which in a certain way belong together—one shows the relative power and the other the relative impotence, of the concluded finite action that has been transmitted. The one judgment perhaps can be expressed thus: "Even with the best will in the world, more *need* not be done." The other may read: "Even with the best will in the world, more *could not* be done." Expressions in which the conditioned dependency of a previous guilt on external contingent causes is claimed or the limits of a determinate responsibility maintained or acknowledged, are also to be considered judgments of finitude.<sup>45</sup>

Along with the judgments of completeness and the judgments of finitude one must mention a third class, which I will call judgments of incompleteness. Like the other two, these judgments relate to given actions as conditions of their possibility and as objects of their activity, and indeed apply, just like the others, to incipient actions, to those in progress, or to those concluded. Common to the judgments of incompleteness and those of finitude is the direct relation to finite action. Judgments of incompleteness should therefore be especially distinguished from judgments of finitude; in the first place, judgments of incompleteness emphasize exclusively the lack, the incompleteness, and unsatisfactory character of finite action, but not their inclination to a certain completion. This distinction does not exclude the fact that in certain circumstances a judgment of finitude contains in itself a judgment of incompleteness or that the latter includes the former in itself. At least these distinct judgments show the possibility of the others in their respective givenness. For example, with respect to a finite action in

45. A judgment of finitude can thus provoke an action in which understanding is bound with clemency, empathy, and forgiveness. For example, all the propositions dealing with the determinism of human behavior in Spinoza are practical propositions in the combination of which a theory of singular reflection is implicit. Their function consists of making men happier through this theory of the determinism of all events.

progress one can say: "Here something is done—or a few things are done—that need not be done," or in another formulation: "What is done here is really superfluous or senseless." In contrast to a judgment of finitude, such a judgment of incompleteness not only says, directly or indirectly, that there is a surplus, a redundancy of capacity and power of finite action, but much more, it confirms—critically—the superfluous, senseless, or improper use of this excess. Another judgment of imperfection in relation to the inception and progress of an action may run as follows: "Here something is—or a few things are—not being done that should and also could be done." In the case of the previous example, it is not simply an existing excess of capacity, a redundancy of power, that is in question, but rather it is the mode of employment of this excess that is open to criticism. So, too, in the last example it is not a question of the statement of an existing lack of power and capacity; rather, the judgment of imperfection here critically concerns the employment of the existing capacity, the operation of available power. Judgments of imperfection are critical judgments, judgments of critique. Herein they are not only distinguished from the judgments of perfection which lack a basis for the critique with respect to infinite actions to which they apply. They are also distinguished by this critical feature from judgments of finitude, which in the finite actions to which they apply could indeed find an adequate basis for a critique, but which disregard this possible critique and limit themselves rather to the formulation of the existing relations of power and the availability of the capacity for the action at hand. Judgments of finitude only become judgments of critique because they are linked in one way or another to a judgment of imperfection. These judgments of critique in no way relate only to incipient actions, as was true in the previous example. Rather, they also hold true in certain circumstances for completed actions, and it may also happen that they accompany the incipient actions from the beginning or emerge in their course, in order to follow critically and guide the course of action from that point onward. A judgment of imperfection in this respect might be thus expressed: "Here something is neglected which must and could be done"; or "Here this and that was left undone without reason," which relates to a completed action.

The three judgments—that of perfection, finitude, and imperfection—are not related to given actions under all circumstances in directly recognizable ways. It may well be that such a directly recognizable relation at first exists only with respect to specific transmissions of actions.<sup>46</sup> Thus, for example, a judgment of imperfection that is related to a given transmission of action can be expressed, "In the face of what happened, more could and should have been done," or, "This and that could have been done

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46. This distinction requires a clarification of the difference between practical judgments that inhere in an action and practical judgments as actions that communicate with given actions.

otherwise and should have been done better," or, "On another occasion, under like or similar circumstances, this or that should be done better." Also, judgments which state that nothing better could happen in the future, or that it could have been worse, appear to relate to a determinate transmission of actions rather than to a singular action, whether they occur finitely or infinitely or finitely-infinitely in one or various respects. In any case, from the formulations of imperfection one cannot directly see whether they apply directly to actions or to determinate transmissions of actions. Statements that express an imperfection, as the previous ones do, are thus ambiguous not only in the sense mentioned, but also depending on which particular mode of transmission and which mode of transmitted action they relate to.

To the classes of judgments on actions and their transmission mentioned thus far, one still has to add another class which I will call judgments of miscarriage and failure. These are closely related to judgments of imperfection and therefore must be carefully distinguished from them. They are distinguished from judgments of imperfection by the fact that they express not only a lack and an imperfection, but also, as their name signifies, a basic failure and miscarriage. These judgments have the following in common with the judgments of perfection, finitude, and imperfection: they apply partly to incipient actions, partly to those found in progress, and partly only to completed actions; further, they directly relate partly to this or that action, and partly to a certain transmission of actions. Thus, for example, it can be the case that a particular action appears as necessarily and forcefully required under given circumstances, yet at the same time, however, such a required and more or less clearly circumscribed action does not occur under the conditions of these circumstances, that inner or outer presuppositions hinder the required action. The required action shows itself as not capable of development under the given circumstances; it miscarries in its inception, before its proper unfolding. Of such a mode of miscarriage one cannot say that this would be a miscarriage of an action already found in full course or the miscarriage of a conclusively completed action. The judgment of miscarriage on such an action already foundering from the outset might be expressed as follows: "Here there is nothing to be done," (in the special sense that here nothing can be done, although one thing or the other really should be done), or in other words: "Everything which here and now should be done is not to be realized," or still another way: "Anything that anyone could do here would not make matters better but only worse." Analogous judgments of miscarriage and failure hold for such actions the incipient miscarriage of which does not belong to the immediate present of the given action itself, but falls into a past that was transmitted in one way or another. Thus it might be stated that "here" or "there" "in this" or "in that case nothing was to be done," or it is said that "all that in this case" or "all that in all of these cases one could have been able to do" would not have improved the situation but rather made it worse. However, one ought to speak of

miscarriage and failure of an action not only with respect to its present, past, or its future, beginning, but also regarding the present, past, and future of its course, and its conclusion following a certain development. The determinate course of an action frequently allows one to note before its final conclusion or in some other way to recognize that it is at the point of failing. Also with respect to the transmitted course of an action one may occasionally affirm: "From this moment on it was clear that the action must fail," or regarding an expected future course: "Here insurmountable difficulties will be met on account of which this will go wrong." Changes for the worse as well as for the good belong to the possibilities of a course of action. These changes enter more or less suddenly, expected or not, into the course of action.

The judgments of the miscarriage and failure of actions apply to their beginning, advance, or conclusion; to the present, past, or future beginning, progression, and conclusion; and to their transmission, presence, and expectation. But one must note there is also a peculiar difference in the mode of failure, the validity of which is above all met with in completed actions. Actions that have reached a conclusion after a certain development are to be judged as failing, whether they have generally found some definite solution to the problem posed for them or not. In the latter case, rather than in the first, I will speak of a basic failure. In this case the judgment of failure concerns above all the result, the attained solution of the problem. This solution is perceived as unsatisfactory or evaluated as unsuitable or false. This judgment of failure, which relates first to the solution of the total task, can also be extended to the individual subsidiary solutions which are either totally or partially rejected together with the total solution. However the action may have turned out in particular, through the attained result nothing may appear to be improved with respect to the existing state of affairs, but rather something or everything may be worsened. Thus the paradox is that actions that fail in this way are distinguished from actions that fail in other ways on a very basic point, namely, they have brought about a very definite result—a solution, though inadequate, to the problem posed to them—but this difference does not count if one attends to the basic relation to their specific worlds of the actions that have failed in a particular way in order generally to evaluate their failure in their own specific worlds. However these actions may have miscarried or failed, the universal judgment holds with reference to them all that through them, none of the particular existing states of affairs has improved. And so it appears that it is this alone that really counts, and thus seen, the production of a result counts nothing at all and does not deserve to be called a solution to the problem. And so far as this universal judgment of failure is concerned, the judgment also holds that in this case, as is generally true when an action brings no improvements, there is a universal risk that through the absence of improvement a corresponding deterioration will be precipitated. What distinguishes the unsuccessful ac-

tion, which in its course brought about an inadequate, unsuccessful solution, from other actions that fail without the production of a definite result, is the peculiarity of its profile, the certain pithiness of a specific physiognomy which is called forth by its peculiar result. Such a "profiling" is missing in those actions which fail in the other way described — both the actions that fail in their inception and those which arrive at no definite result within a definite course — the effect of which rather disintegrates into a scattered multiplicity of unrelated particulars. The characteristics of clarity and darkness, of precision and haziness, and inadequate distinctness, which in general one relates to given forms of knowing in order to typify them, can be applied analogously to given modes of action that are subjected to evaluation. But as in the one case this allows one to say little with precision beyond the basic distinction of the modes of knowing according to truth and falsity, so also here it contributes little directly to the basic distinction between the success and failure of actions.

Every action, even in a certain respect infinite action, knowingly or not assumes the risk of failure. Thus one can say that every action follows the universally valid judgment: it is basically better to do something rather than nothing. The famous question raised in rational metaphysics of why there is anything at all, and not, rather, nothing, takes its origin from this universally valid maxim of action, and in reference to its universal validity and necessity finds its most proximate response. To be sure, the validity of this judgment, notwithstanding a certain universal validity and necessity, is not clearly established for every individual case of action. For this judgment changes in this or that manner more or less out of necessity, with the alteration of the circumstances of the questioned action belonging to it, and under the condition that this evaluation of these circumstances changes. The judgment that it is better to do something rather than nothing holds necessarily in another way where everything can only be better but not worse under the perspective of the action in question, if one compares these circumstances to others which suggest an entirely different judgment, namely, that one can indeed expect no basic improvement, but neither is a worsening of the situation to be feared with certainty from the outset. The danger here of doing something basically incorrect is small, or not present at all. It will again be an entirely different matter with respect to the judgment which recommends doing over not doing where the proximate circumstances of the action in question give rise to the judgment that here things can only be made worse and that thus basically everything can only be perverted. The judgment of the preference of action over non-action holds universally for every possible action as such, with respect to its impetus, but it also relates in the case of the individual action not only to this as such, but also to the respective situation and to the proximate circumstances in their specific evaluation from the perspective of the action in question. This evaluation of the general situation and the proximate circumstances of action is either given, as it were, indepen-

dently or it is co-contained in some way in that judgment. Such a judgment that it is better not only in general, but also here and now, to do something rather than nothing is scarcely problematic where the individual action in question sees itself imbedded in a generally progressive, positively evaluated development. It becomes progressively problematical where such an optimistic evaluation of the situation gives way to a critical, and finally to a skeptical appreciation; above all where there is no chance of a general improvement of the situation and circumstances as such, and thus also with respect to the disputed action. In this latter case of more or less hopeless circumstances in a certain hopeless situation, the opposite judgment appears to lie very much nearer. The formulation suggests itself that, at least under the given circumstances, if not in general, it is better to do nothing rather than something.

#### IV Summary

The attempt I have made here to develop a provisional instrument for the definition and analysis of actions takes its point of departure from the presupposition that neither a universally valid notion of action nor a universal range of application for such a notion is *a priori* capable of being defined without further qualification. None of the classical arts and sciences that are concerned with action are capable of unequivocally establishing such a universal range of application from themselves beyond their own region of application and validity. This also holds true of philosophical ethics and theology, as well as of jurisprudence and politics, and rhetoric and poetics. One must ask himself whether contemporary social science (even where, in the name of behavioral science or the science of action, it lays claim to the line of succession from the classical sciences of action) is in a basically different situation, in spite of its universal aspirations. It is characteristic of any notion of action that it provokes with special force the problem of how such a notion is possible and whether it is universally necessary. Thus behaviorism, in spite of the difficulties of its own position, has an intrusive plausibility. In a naive and general way of speaking of action and theories of action, one can easily overlook the open character of the concept of action, which is based upon founding evaluations. Its meaning fluctuates with the variations not only within historical and cultural traditions, but also within a specific tradition, in dependence upon the theoretical-practical context. But above all, the notion of action is itself in a basic sense a value notion. Before any evaluation of particular actions and types of actions, a basic evaluation occurs with the positing of action as such. To put it paradoxically: actions constitute themselves in their own positing and acknowledgment and eventually also in the rejection of their acknowledgment. Actions in which actions constitute themselves occur in the realms of human communication, historical occurrences, and universal scientific *praxes*.

The constitution of actions presupposes the existence of characteristics and criteria for actions. With respect to the multiplicity of such criteria, modern philosophy, specifically transcendental philosophy, has given its special attention to one of these, namely, the criterion of "consciousness" or "self-consciousness." Accordingly, consciousness should accompany all actions that can be attributed to an identical subject, and this accompaniment is to be considered either as factually given or as basically possible. But there are some things that speak against the uncritical employment of this criterion. Thus consciousness does not play such a dominant role in human behavior that it could procure for that criterion a more than special employment. The precipitous performances of the unconscious that are brought to attention in psychoanalysis suggest that one also employs the predicate "unconscious" for actions and acknowledges unconscious actions as actions. Therefore, one must still search for a universal criterion of action. Then there is the additional consideration that one cannot immediately see how such a criterion of consciousness is to be used as a criterion of action. Consciousness, considered in itself and related to sensations, experiences, actions, and so on, is distinguished according to grades of intensity. Thus the question necessarily arises as to which intensity of consciousness should function as the criterion of action. Or, one would only be required to speak of consciousness in general in regard to the identity of a subject of action in the face of a multiplicity of given actions. If this identity forms the content of the consciousness in question, then the same objection is raised as before. Otherwise, the question arises as to how else the interdependence of consciousness and the identity of the subject of action is to be conceived and whether this identity itself functions as the criterion of action. Supposing the latter were the case, a counter-criterion could easily be given: as actions can only be conceived that are defined through their connection in the unity of a single subject of action, it is also quite possible to determine a singular action in relation to a multiplicity of subjects which, as real or potential subjects of action, participate in this action and as such play a specific role in its constitution. For example, a drama with several actors in it represents an action of this type. Or one might postulate an action of this type in speaking of a community task that is accomplished by many subjects of action in common. Finally, every action can be seen as an object of possible evaluation from this point of view.

Basically the criterion of consciousness can only be used as a criterion of action in conjunction with other criteria. One such other criterion is that of a specific type of knowing that can be characterized as practical knowing and that can be used not only in conjunction with the criterion of consciousness but also by itself, and as such is of universal validity. For practical knowing need not be conscious; it can enter into action unconsciously, without thereby necessarily becoming an instinctive reaction. But the use of this criterion also has its characteristic difficulties. What belongs to prac-

tical knowing that one might be able to use as a determinate criterion of action? If, as usually happens, one takes practical knowing as knowledge of intended goals and the means to their realization, it remains to be asked what must be co-contained in this knowing in order to distinguish a corresponding action from other givens. Also, there is the danger that, through the exclusive acceptance of this criterion, all those human functions and activities which consciously or unconsciously do not involve a determinate projection of a goal must be denied recognition and thus also the adoption of the means to that goal. Whoever chooses not to act often has good grounds for his non-action. If he does not have them, as is often the case, there will be others who quickly and happily come to his aid and provide him with reasons. For some who do not act, it often seems that the will and intention to act is lacking. If he does not desire motivation himself, others will be aware of the need to motivate him; however, this may only succeed in making him aware of his lack of intention. Perhaps he will develop an intention of non-action. Must a goal be attributed to him in order to be able to recognize his behavior as an action and to evaluate it? Finally, using the criterion of practical knowing for a particular mode of action has a special difficulty: If one consciously or unconsciously denies having willed this and that, without being able to say what he had willed instead, will we then disallow that his denial has the character of action, or instead attribute to his denial an intention, a purpose, and a motive?

But there is another difficulty with using the criterion of practical knowing, namely, the determination of its ontological locus. Just as awareness was conceived of as an accompaniment, so practical knowing is thought of as a kind of placeholder. One sees that practical knowing is given in the consciousness or in the unconscious of an acting subject or more directly in the acting subject as such. Hence a particular subject of action seems presupposed as the locus of practical knowing if one uses this knowing as a criterion of action. Thus it appears necessary that using this criterion presupposes another criterion that allows for an acting subject to accompany an action. But just as one can think of consciousness as an accompaniment to actions, as an actual or merely possible "accompanier," so also can one think of practical knowing as a real or possible placeholder in a real or merely possible subject of action. Acting subjects as real entities constitute the necessary presupposition of real locations for real and possible practical knowing. But above all it is a particular real practical knowing in the form of a complex of practical principles that permits one to speak in its regard of various possible comparable subjects of action that are at one's disposal as real subjects of action. One can therefore say, varying the title of the famous play of Pirandello, "Six Characters in Search of an Author": practical principles in search of a subject of action. One must also consider, in using that criterion, that actions allow for the use of the phrase "cunning of reason," and in many cases even require it. Correspondingly, practical knowing is attributed chiefly to the

action as a whole, in which the real locus for this knowing is seen. The acting subjects are then conceived as participating, not only in the action as such, but also in their practical knowing, in extreme cases in the mode of specific ignorance. The problem of using a criterion of practical knowing as a criterion of action is thus a problem of its localization, distribution, and differentiation. Hence one recognizes Oedipus an agent, regardless of his ignorance; and also Socrates involved in particular dialogical activity is an agent, however we understand his confession of his own ignorance.

Just as the criterion of consciousness is to be used partly in relative independence of, and partly in conjunction with, complementary criteria, so also is this the case with the criterion of practical knowing. The general problem of usage, however, is not solved once and for all in this way. This holds true not only for the criterion of the reciprocal relationship of actions and the subjects of action to one another, but also for two criteria that play a special and specific role in the use of the relational criterion, namely, the criterion of responsibility and the criterion of the pursuit of happiness. What is conscious to a subject or what it knows consciously or unconsciously in no way always and necessarily coincides with that for which it is sometimes prepared to take responsibility; likewise, it does not always coincide with that for which—rightly or not—it is made responsible. The margin of one's own responsibility is in general partly narrower and partly wider than the horizon of one's own consciousness and that of one's own unconscious and conscious knowing. One must not necessarily feel responsible for everything that comes to mind or is in the mind, despite a feeling of the close relationship of the acting subject with his own consciousness. One also is not responsible for his knowing as such, not even for all cases of its acquisition and use in general. But one must be responsible for much with respect to one's own knowing; in particular in the cases of a peculiar mode of acquisition and a peculiar kind of use. The responsibility of the agent relates above all to practical knowing. On the other hand, one is made responsible—however rightly—for much that was not conscious or entirely unknown. One may feel responsible for uncommitted actions and be drawn to account for the unforeseen consequences of his own actions that he did not directly produce. Many people even feel they are responsible for their dreams. The criterion of responsibility displays a vast spectrum and hence makes possible an extremely varied usage which reaches from an ascription of actions as such to the recognition of guilt and innocence. Responsibility may be linked with conscientiousness. One may take co-responsibility for the actions of others and thus grant that divided responsibility still remains responsibility. Can one completely relieve anyone of responsibility? As with every criterion, the criterion of responsibility points to the possibility of counter-criteria: There is the possibility of irresponsible action. One may avoid responsibility deliberately or indeliberately, consciously or unconsciously. Does the action in question thereby become deprived of its being recognized as action? Or will it, on the basis of the criteria in question or other criteria of action, be established precisely in its

character as action? There are situations in which one does not relieve a person from his responsibility—cases, in other words, in which responsibility expressly bids the prevention of a threatening flight from responsibility. Sometimes such an observed flight is not prevented, but is indeed responded to with scorn, thereby recognizing that criterion in a special manner. But one cannot always conclude that when the criterion of responsibility cannot be used, no other criterion of action can be used: the impossibility or incapacity for action must be presumed.

Striving for a momentarily good state—for maintaining and improving it—and the pursuit of happiness play a special role among all possible criteria of action. But their use also has its difficulties. Thus with the criterion of striving for well-being, the question of valid criteria for distinguishing between animal and human behavior comes into play. Should one, on the basis of the validity of this criterion, also acknowledge the capacity for activity in animals? Or is there good sense, though not a sense always evident, in attributing to man alone this capacity, and thus in looking for a special and adequate criterion? The pursuit of happiness is counted, at least in the tradition of philosophy, as the specifically human form of striving for well-being. But the use of this as a criterion for action is no less problematical for one reason—since the most diverse notions are known to be linked to the concept of happiness—the duration, intensity, emotionality, and rationality of happiness, and correspondingly diverse pictorial representations. In the face of the multiplicity of such representations, one may doubt whether there is much sense in saying that it is common for all people to strive for a happy life. Some only long for it, others seek to realize it, and still others are capable only with difficulty of acquaintance with *eudaimonia*. But there is still another difficulty: the pursuit of happiness is not immediately valid as an individual, singular action, also not in any context of action one might choose; it is valid in that context of action where its unity is constituted in the whole of an intentionally lived individual life or in the whole of the life of a human society. But how can one speak generally of single actions under this presupposition, if the constitution of singular and universal human life cannot possibly be a matter of an action? Is there sense in speaking of a uniform intention with respect to a human life-totality even when people, as today, do not generally orient themselves in their behavior by positing the value of such a whole?

Reference to the multiform character of the possible criteria of action is not a valid argument against the possibility of a unitary notion of action. It is a consequence, in the conception of a transcendental philosophy, only to recognize actions as such where scientific method expresses itself, that is, only actions of methodically scientific praxis itself and other actions under the condition of their scientific, methodical presentation. But in spite of this consequence, the transcendental theory of action is not so unequivocal as its appeal to scientific method might make one believe. The necessary division of

all action into scientific praxes and actions that can be scientifically described is only an index for other above developed dualisms. Above all with respect to nonscientific action, the temptation arises to work through a plenitude of individual criteria of action with reference to their "family resemblances" in order in this way to give rise to an at least vague idea of a unitary concept of action. This inquiry pursues neither of these two well-traveled routes in the transcendental theory of action. It considers the problem of a unitary notion of action by an inquiry into the following items: the possibility of the *congruity* of reflective processes and actions; the possibility of the *correspondence* between theories of reflection and practical principles of action; and the possibility of an *affinity* between the emotional givens of reflection and the propositional givens of the practical knowing involved in action.



# SUBJECT LOGIC AND PREDICATE LOGIC\*

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When a tradition of philosophical thinking breaks up, it remains a question as to whether that tradition contains sufficient intellectual reserves and resources to come to life again at a later stage of history and to display its theoretical utility in new ways. In the following deliberations we shall engage in a test as to the durability of one such tradition. What is here at issue is the evaluation of two complementary conceptions of that logic which reconstructs the structure in language of the subject and predicate of the proposition. The debate between these two conceptions has become active in the course of the development of contemporary science since the time of Galileo. The debate seems to have been decided in so-called modern logic in favor of the final victory of one of the parties participating in the controversy.

"Modern" logic deserves attention in connection with the topic insofar as it has supported one side of the controversy that arose in "ancient" logic, thus occasioning a provisional decision. The controversy may be characterized as a debate between the conception of logic as "subject logic" and as "predicate logic." We may note that in "modern" logic, perhaps since Frege, predicate logic has provisionally won the favorable verdict in the trial. It may meanwhile be admitted as a credit to the thesis that even today it is "worth the effort" to appeal the case again, and indeed to do so not merely in its historical perspective. At issue is the task of evaluating the gram-

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\* Translated from Jürgen Mittelstraß and Manfred Riedel (Editors), *Vernünftiges Denken* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1978).

This essay explores the complementary interrelations between subject logic and predicate logic in Aristotle, Leibniz, Kant, Frege, and Hegel. Aristotle is regarded as being exemplary of subject logic, while Frege is cited as the chief witness for predicate logic. This essay explicitly calls upon "constructive" avenues of thinking in considering how Leibniz, Kant, and Hegel offer contributions to both theories of logic. In conclusion, the two logics can be used as available possibilities, where predicate logic is most appropriate to natural science, and the logic of the subject best suits reasoning in the human studies, philosophy, and history.

matical structure of the subject and predicate in its specifically logical, perhaps even ontological, relevance. In working on this task, a development is prominent in the history of logic, in the first phase of which the leading position devolves to the "subject" rather than to the predicate; while, in a further development, under the influence of new epistemological interests and perspectives governing knowledge, the predicate acquires dominance over the subject in the suit between the parties representing the linguistico-logical factors.

It then becomes natural to name the logical conception of the first kind as "subject logic," or "logic of the subject." Accordingly, one may accord to the competing theory the name "predicate logic," or "logic of the predicate." The thesis that it is time to proceed with the long-overdue abdication of the subject, which, thanks to Aristotle, held the throne, and to process its discharge through the logically interpreted propositional predicate parallels a much discussed thematic that, for example, E. Cassirer has proposed under the formula, "Concept as Substance and Concept as Function."<sup>1</sup> At the same time, this title is intended to refer to the thesis that a reconstruction of the history of modern science in all of the disciplines of the natural sciences, as well as in mathematics and logic, enables us to recognize a development according to which the initial domination of the concept of substance established by Aristotle is dismantled and the principle of "relation," or "function," acquires dominance in its place. Cassirer's commitment to this philosophy of science (*Wissenschaftstheorie*) is directed toward the program of the further unfolding, in normative perspective, of this developmental tendency as discovered in the reconstruction of the structure of the history of science.

Today the problem situation thus created is misleadingly forgotten. In the field of "formal" logic, the decision has favored the concept of the logical predicate;<sup>2</sup> and one operates on terrain that has been prepared by controversies long vanished from sight. However, it remains a question as to whether one is justified in regarding naively, with a forward-looking view, the problems as resolved in order to win results from a standpoint that has ceased to be problematic.

In the following discussion, attention will be turned to what has been forgotten. For the motto contained in Cassirer's title—know the signs of the theory of science and history of science of the "present" and work with the instrument of function instead of with that of "substance"—has its parallel

1. E. Cassirer, *Substanzbegriff und Funktionsbegriff* (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer Publishing, 1923); or *Substance and Function*, trans. W. C. Swabey and M.C. Swabey (New York: Dover, 1953).
2. The terms 'logical predicate' and 'predicate logic' are to be understood in the context of a juxtaposition with the logic of the subject (subject logic), though not in the sense in which modern logic employs these terms as, for example, in juxtaposition with propositional logic.

in the development of logic at the stage in which one takes the side of predicate logic against subject logic. Moreover, we must remember that traditionally correlations are evident between the concept of substance and the propositional subject in logic, on the one hand, and between the principle of the function and that of the predicate, on the other. Regarding the former, I shall turn to the Aristotelian tradition of ontology and logic; and with respect to the correspondence between function and predicate, I shall call upon Frege as the chief witness and representative.<sup>3</sup>

The course of the evolution from the logic of the subject to that of the predicate must be brought into connection with a change in the selection of the world perspective, which forms the background or basis from which the contents and objects at issue are considered and addressed. This thesis can also be formulated so as to say that the change in question occurs within the context of a transformation of the "ontology" represented. What follows may also be read as indicating that a certain ontology is foundational for a philosophy that proceeds from the logical subject; for example, that of Aristotle.

## I

These reflections lead to the celebrated question of the relation of logic and grammar according to Aristotle. This theme recalls the pervasive and often repeated assertion that Aristotle developed his logic on the basis of language. This assertion is false, if it is supposed to suggest that the Aristotelian theory of the relation of subject and predicate, of the categories, concepts, and inferences, has come into being in such a way that general features and rules have been abstracted and systematically collected from the actual usage of language. Support could be provided for this theory of the production of logical principles through abstraction from language by the observation that, for example, in the theory of categories striking correlations between grammar and logic are to be noted. The linguistic logic of Aristotle, however, is derived in a manner different from that of grammar. It selects its beginning from the ever-preceding actuality of the *praxis* of acting, thinking, and speaking. This method can be described by a locution such as the following: Whoever is thinking should "trans-port" himself into the "world" which is familiar prior to every artificial scientific arrangement, into the "world" of self-evidently practiced achievements of mutually interrelated acting, thinking, and speaking. Here one has obtained practice in using words and forming sentences in conformity with the norms of social speech, in which one makes assertions about a propositional

3. Compare, for example, G. Frege, "Funktion and Begriff" (Jena, 1891); or "Function and Concept," trans. P. T. Geach, in *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*, ed. P. T. Geach and M. Black (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), pp. 21-41.

subject, that is, something taken as a basis. The philosopher selects his starting point and basis in this pragmatic world; and he distances himself from this praxis by taking a first step of reflection when he asks whether what is actually done in practice and what is initially accepted as self-evident is "justified," that is, if one wants to accomplish scientific tasks upon this terrain. He challenges the ever "traditionally" practiced logos of language to distance itself and to be "alienated" (Hegel) from itself, in order that what he has previously done without question can be legitimized, corrected, or checked against norms through distancing itself in knowledge.<sup>4</sup> Upon this path, philosophical thinking makes the discovery that as already practiced language, it has self-evidently and all along fulfilled its own requirement for 'being-based' (*Be-gründens*),<sup>5</sup> of starting from a "ground," a "basis" in the performance of language, that in fact in the proposition it has taken a subject as a basis (*zugrunde gelegt hat*) in order to attribute further contents to this "basis" (*Grunde*) by predication. Philosophical reason ascertains that it has made use of a structure of acting, thinking, and speaking that is immersed in the life-world, in which a "something" is assigned the position of "what is taken as a basis" (*des Zugrundegelegten*), the position of the subject. In conformity with this, what is to be attributed to the subject-basis is assigned the position of the predicate.<sup>5</sup> On the strength of its program of legitimization, philosophical thinking must inquire as to what sort of being is predestined by "nature" to be subject, to be 'what is taken as a basis,' just as it must inquire into what is the "natural" predicate. As inquiry is made into what one may consider the rightful subject of the proposition, progress is made along the path to the "proper" and "true" basis (*Grund*), which by nature is accorded the position of being the subject. This question aims at the ' "what" it is' ("Was"-sein), about which a proposition is

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4. Kamlah, in W. Kamlah and P. Lorenzen, *Logische Propädeutik oder Vorschule des vernünftigen Redens*, rev. ed. (Mannheim: Bibliographical Institute/University Pocket Books, 1967), section 2: The Problem of the Beginning.
5. It is inevitable that grammatical structure be considered, at least briefly, in a discussion of the logico-ontological reconstruction of the subject-predicate relationship in language. This leads to the difficult question, answerable only by linguistics; namely, to what degree may I treat as paradigmatic the subject-predicate structure of a type of language such as "ours"? In this regard, I require only a minimum of linguistic universality in making use of the relational model: "underlying basis—what is laid upon it" (*Zugrundliegendes—Daraufabgelegtes*). When I interpret the grammatical subject-predicate structure in accordance with this model, I believe I am making use of a model that is more readily generalized than that available in the form of the linguists' *agens-actio* model. Moreover, every such model lies along the same path upon which Aristotle sought and found his categories—what is at issue is the logic and "ontology," respectively, that are actualized in language. Also, compare H. Gipper, "Gibt es ein sprachliches Relativitätsprinzip?" in *Untersuchungen zur Sapir-Whorfhypothese* (Frankfurt: Fischer Publishing, 1972).

predicated. It is answered by stating the "essence" ("Wesen"). Thus, the question of the legitimation of the grammatical structure of the subject and predicate follows the leading thread of the question about the "basis" as it leads to the principle of the "essence." The essence is subject by nature. It can never be predicated of anything else, but other things can be predicated of it. The linguistico-logical procedure of Aristotle thus traverses a course that begins with the situation in which linguistic performances have become second nature. This beginning is an acquaintance and an ability that can be presupposed by "nature" and that is familiar to us in the communication of our dealings with one another. It leads the "proper," "existing" basis to the "essence." Appeal is thus made to a "metaphysical" concept. Here the word "metaphysics" is not intended to suggest solemn meanings, but rather, has as its theme the 'groundwork' (*Grund-lage*) of the acting, thinking, and speaking which have become "natural." In the case of "essence," the consideration is what makes an existing thing, such as a grape, be "what it is"—in contrast to the properties, such as measurable quantity, quality, spatial and temporal determinants, and relations to other things, that belong to it. "Essence" is the moment of a thing that as its 'what it is' enables it to be the subject of a proposition.<sup>6</sup> The Latin name "substance"—which was given to it at the time of Cicero and to which the word "inherence" or "accident" corresponds as the designation of the properties—implies the model of 'being a basis' (*Grund-sein*), of being a bearer of the properties. In conformity with this model, the position of the subject in the proposition is accorded by nature to the essence; while the position of the predicate is accorded to the properties.

Properties are attached to the essence: their assertability (predicability) is a symptom of their dependence and relative character. The essence, on the contrary, is "being-in-itself" in the sense of self-subsistence. Therefore, the essence assumes the role of the subject in the proposition—that which itself is not predicated but that of which the predication is made. The role of this self-subsistent 'being a basis' is not taken over by universal contents that are common to many particular things, but rather, by such beings as have been determined as "this being" through the activity of a formative energy. The fundamental model for this is provided when something is predicated of an individual. To be "primary and being-in-itself" can be asserted above all else of "being-this" ("Dieses-Sein"). "Being an individual is at the same time being what an individual is. Socrates and being-Socrates is one and the same."<sup>7ii</sup>

The determining form is the concept of the thing that is effective in reality: the "eidos." This form makes the being into what it is and thereby constitutes a linguistico-logical moment by which it can be predicated and articulated in language. Thus, for example, health is the eidos of the healthy

6. For example, see *Metaphysica* 1038b. 23.

7. *Ibid.*, 1032a.

person and at the same time the logos in the soul that is conceptualizing and thinking of this health. "Health (*eidos*) is the concept present in the soul and belongs to knowledge."<sup>8</sup> One asserts that various properties are characteristic of health, and one must be able to determine these if one is to speak of health. Relevant instances include, for example, an equilibrium of the life functions, or a correct temperature reading of the body.

The individualized essence is destined by nature for the role of being the subject; and the abstract-universal, which is proper to being the predicate, is based in it. One could speak, in the Aristotelian sense, of an absolute subject and distinguish it from merely relative subject characteristics that have a more universal quality. Just as Callias plays the role of the subject in the proposition "Callias is a man," so also, in the proposition "man is a living being" the role of the subject is now taken over by "man." "Some things are so constituted that they cannot truthfully be asserted universally of any other things, such as Cleon and Callias and the particulars and sensibly perceptible." If the subject position in the proposition is reserved for what is fitted by nature to be 'taken as a basis' (*zu Grunde gelegt zu werden*), then a model is suggested that could perhaps be described as follows: just as essential being, that is, the substance, represents the basis that "supports" the properties and accidents that "rest upon" it, so also, the subject is treated as the fundament that supports the predicates. If affirmation is declared to be that predication in which something is asserted of something,<sup>9</sup> then, in the language of this model of support, predication would be described such that in the affirmative assertion something is added to the subject by the predicate. Negation, however, would be described as an act in which the predicate takes away something from the subject (*apophasis*).

As the expression that captures the Aristotelian position in the issue "subject logic or predicate logic," the following proposition may first be regarded as valid: the essential being, that is, the substance, is by "nature" and on the strength of its "*physis*" destined to occupy the position of the subject in the proposition; while the remaining categories are characterized as predicative from the start. The second thesis is then built upon this result, namely, that the determining and governing role vis-à-vis the predicate falls to the subject, as the representative of that position in the proposition for which what is "by nature primary" is reserved. The subject is the fundament and "supporter" of the predicate; that is, Aristotelian logic is a subject logic. At this point it can be indicated that the primacy of the subject over the predicate can be provisionally defined only by the model of the basis, or fundament, and what rests upon it; but that in the course of the explication of this thesis the presuppositions of a superior model are made available.

If the essential being (*das Wesen*) is the "natural" and "proper" subject,

8. Ibid., 1032b.

9. *De interpretatione* c 6, 25.

then language can validly be regarded as legitimized insofar as it takes care that by it (that is, language) the role of the grammatical subject is assigned to that something which is by nature subject. In this case a subject logic is maintained insofar as by it the role of the logical and ontological 'being a basis' is transmitted for the structure of the proposition to the grammatical subject on the basis of the content of its essence. Then the subject is not only what is "primary" in the accidental grammatical sense, but, thus justified, also maintains its position as what is "by nature primary."<sup>10</sup>

The meaning thus accruing to the subject in the proposition is only to be estimated in its entire scope when one recalls the nature of the essence that is represented by the subject. Here, reference is primarily made to the role of "being a *cause*." For example, whoever asserts something about the essence of health, at the same time also says something about the cause of health.<sup>11</sup> If one, for example, mentions the essence, that is, the subject, 'health' as a state in which the materials in the organism are combined with one another in the correct proportion and in the proper amounts, then one simultaneously designates the cause of health. If the doctor wants to maintain or reestablish health, then his task is to practice medicine in conformity with this etiology. Here is another example: if someone is called upon to say "what" is a doorstep, then the answer would "naturally" be offered that it is a definite placement of a piece of wood or squared stone. One also would at the same time thus suggest to anyone who has to lay a doorstep how he must arrange the wood or stone so that the result would perform the function expected of a thing characterized as a doorstep. The correct insertion of the doorstep can be regarded as the cause for the use expected from it. At the same time, the essence (*Wesen*) of the doorstep consists in the characteristic of being correctly inserted.<sup>12</sup>

Essence as 'what is taken as a basis' (*Zugrundliegendes*) and as "cause" can in a determinate sense be equated with what is "material" (*hyle*). However,

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10. *Met.*, 1019a. 5. "The subject is prior, because substance is prior."
11. *Ibid.*, 1043a. It becomes clear that one would have to see the cause *that* a thing is as well as *how* it is in the differentiations of the essence "insofar as the essence is the cause that something exists."
12. If it is said in one sentence "what" something is, then one can designate this as the definition. According to what was just said, the *definiendum*, which occupies the subject position as essence, at the same time presents the causal aspect which is only articulated in the *definiens*, the predicate, and is, as it were, drawn out of the subject, but not externally added to it. A process is thus initiated, by which the form is combined with the material while forming it. "For example, what is a calm in the wind? Rest in an expanse of air; here the air is the material, the rest, however, is the actuality and substance. What is a calm at sea? Smoothness of the sea; here the material substratum is the sea, the state of smoothness, however, is the actuality and form. From this it may be seen what the sensible substance is and how it exists. The one is as matter, the other is as form and actuality, and the third kind of substance is the product of the other two" (*Met.*, 1043a. 23ff.).

it is nevertheless merely a “relative” material, whose materiality consists in its being immediately given, in being ‘what is taken as the basis’ of further predicative determinations. In fact, both “material” and “form” are always brought into play. Substance is characterized as the groundwork and the cause, which also characterizes the subject of the proposition. The latter consequently acquires precedence over the predicate. For the predicate could not express this causality if it were not derivable from the cause, which is the essence. To be sure, a situation thereby obtains through which the previously employed support model is put out of action and surpassed. Essence, substance, and the analogous subject do not “support” the accidents, that is, the predicates, but permit the latter to emerge out of themselves. Thus, just as the substance can be viewed as the cause of its accidents, properties, and such, the subject can be regarded as the cause of its predicates.<sup>13</sup>

Substance, and correspondingly, the subject, also fulfill their role of ‘being a basis’ for accidents and predicates, respectively, in the way they prove to be at once self-subsistent and permanent. They are self-subsistent because the “thing itself” (“Sache selbst”) is available in the substance; and, moreover, the substance is permanent insofar as it not only “supports” its properties, relations, modes of acting, and so on, but also joins and unifies them into an entire individual being (*Wesen*). ‘Being an essence’ (*Wesen*) and ‘being one essence’ are exactly the same.<sup>14</sup> Self-subsistence is the privilege of substance and of the subject, respectively, insofar as everything that “inheres” is grounded either as accident or predicate. However, the most critical trait of the subject, which establishes its primacy over the predicate, surpasses even the characteristics of self-subsistence and permanence in importance. This trait presents us with a reinforcement of the aspect of ‘being a “basis”’ and shows us the subject as a unifying power, which connects the series of predicates (that may be asserted by this subject) into an individual and coherent being (*Wesen*). Thus, Aristotle asks, what is it that makes man into a unified entity? “Whereby is he one and not many, for example, a living being (*Wesen*) and a biped, particularly when, as some assert, there is both a living being in itself and a bipedal being?” What is appealed to is the unifying power of the substance-subject, which combines every predicative content, such as bipedality, rationality, and mortality, into an

13. This combination of substantiality and causality also plays a decisive role in Leibniz and in the German academic philosophy that followed him. Its traces are also available in the Kantian Doctrine of the Categories and in Kant’s *Lectures on Metaphysics*. Compare F. Kaulbach, “Kants Theorie des Handelns,” *Kant-Studien*, Proceedings of the IV International Kant-Congress in Mainz, 6-10 April 1974, ed. G. Gunke and J. Kopper (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1974).

14. Compare with F. Kaulbach, *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (Darmstadt: Scientific Book Association, 1972), pp. 47 ff.

individual, inseparable content of meaning (*Bedeutung*). The one-ness does not have the character of a conglomeration, but rather of a whole, perhaps such as that of a syllable. The self-subsistence and totality of the syllable may be viewed as the "cause" of our designating the collection of letters as a "syllable."<sup>15</sup> The "connection," which is established by the energy effective in the substance-subject, is not separated from the material elements, which are united into a whole through it. It is, rather, a unifying movement through which the elements (in the example of the syllable, it is the particular letters) yield a whole. The production of the "whole" is not guaranteed by means of a mere "and," but rather by means of the movement of the participation of the united elements (the individual letters in the essential whole of the syllable). Hence, a merely conjunctive connection of the predicates asserted by the subject would not obtain were the *eidos* to be realized and exhausted in the possibilities laid out in the subject-predicate structure. The unifying power proceeding from the subject can only be effective in connecting the predicate into a whole when each of the predicates of itself already represents this whole which is the subject. The predicate "wise," as in the statement "Socrates is wise," would then have to be aimed at the individual essence of Socrates in such a way that it would not refer to a universal content, possibly assignable to many persons, but would be directed toward this subject, Socrates as an individual. The "being wise" of Socrates would then be a predicate that solely fits Socrates, insofar as the wisdom thus cited is actually Socratic wisdom, which, as individual wisdom, might perhaps be characterized as a mixture of irony and interest in truth.

In conclusion, I have found 'being a basis' and 'being a cause,' permanence and self-subsistence, and the unifying power that combines accidents, the predicates, into a whole to be characteristics of the substance-subject, which secures its dominant position over the predicate. If one is to correctly grasp this idea of the unifying movement activated by this power, then it is necessary to modify the model of support that I was previously discussing. For the subject cannot then be designated as the groundwork upon which the predicates are laid down; but rather the subject must be recognized as the unifying process that produces the predicates and forms them into a whole. Don Quixote is simultaneously serious and ridiculous. In his seriousness we find contained the ridiculousness and in his ridiculousness, the seriousness: both are Quixotic.

In a more detailed treatment of the topic, much would still be left to be said about Aristotle. For example, I would have to cite the "analogy," according to which the "movement" evoked by means of *energia* is related to actualized *dynamis*, analogous to the way essence is related to the material in which it is realized. E. Hoffman has read this analogy as coordinating the relation of actuality and potentiality with that of substance and accident

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15. *Met.*, 1041b. 11ff.; also Kaulbach, *Einführung*, p. 49.

and even with that of subject and predicate. "Both subsistence and actuality are 'by nature prior'; both inherence as well as potentiality are 'by nature posterior.' "<sup>16</sup>

In summary, I offer for consideration the proposal that Aristotle engaged in a metagrammatical reconstruction of the relation of the subject and predicate on the basis of an ontological logic. The origin of the ontology which is thus brought into play is to be sought in the *world* of associations with persons and affairs and in the world of action in the realm of the *polis*. The ontology and its pattern of thinking distinguish between self-subsistence—the constancy of essential being (*Wesen*) continuous amid changes—and properties; and, analogously, between the "proper" natural subject and its predicate. The circumstance that even in grammar language assigns the subject position to the "natural" subject yields the justification of the grammatical subject-predicate structure on the basis of the ontological-logical structure.

The result of this justification permits a better determination of the terms "subject logic" and "predicate logic" than was initially possible. I shall now say that Aristotle is a representative of subject logic insofar as he confirms and legitimizes the use that language makes of the factors "subject" and "predicate" on the basis of a "natural" metagrammatical theory of the subject. Correlatively, I might characterize a theory as a predicate logic if it finds the "proper" subject (what is to be 'taken as a basis') in the position that *language* assigns to the grammatical predicate.

Before I make a transition to predicate logic, a remark about the philosophical motivation for the change from one logical type to the other is in order. This change is connected with a transformation of the "position" maintained by the epistemological subject vis-à-vis its object. It is understandable in terms of the change that occurs in the concept of nature.

## II

In Aristotle it is clear that the propositional subject maintains its determinative role by virtue of having the mission of representing the nature (*physis*) of things. Self-subsistence, 'being a fundament' of predication, the essential power of combining itself and its predicates into an identity, belongs to the "nature of things." A movement is effective in the nature of things by which the thing is united into the unity of an essence (*Wesen*). Corresponding to this is a conception of nature as the world within which we act, move, live, and breathe. Nature is defined in terms of *movement*. It is precisely the "archetype of movement and alteration."<sup>17</sup> Nature is that which has in itself the beginning of movement, that is, change of place,

16. E. Hoffman, *Die Sprache und die Archaische Logik* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, and Paul Siebeck, Publisher, 1925).

17. Ross, ed., *Physics*, 200b. 12.

transformation, growth and decay, and perhaps even the emergence and disappearance (the coming to be and passing away) of essential being (*Wesen*).<sup>18</sup> Thus, on the strength of its "nature," the subject is able to actualize the power that unifies its predicates into the unity of *one* object. The unfolding of the proposition into a subject and predicate and their being brought together (*symploke*) into the unity of one meaningful assertion may be comprehended as movements which themselves bear natural characteristics. A true assertion is itself a movement of the 'activity of nature' (*physis*). The link between subject and predicate is not artificially produced by the speaking and thinking subject, rather it is a result of the 'activity of nature' of which the thinking and speaking subject, when it unifies a subject and predicate, proves to be a custodian.

But what kind of a situation arises if the epistemological subject does not behave as the spokesman and representative of the 'activity of nature'? What happens if the knowing subject claims an independent role vis-à-vis nature as object, if the speaking and thinking subject is understood as lawgiver to "nature," who banishes the objects of nature to a context of appearances and captures them in a network of necessary relations? With this change of position of the speaking and thinking subject in relation to nature, a transformation of the concept of nature takes place that I have elsewhere characterized as the transition from "free" to "bound" nature.<sup>19</sup> In connection with this alteration of the position of the speaking and knowing subject vis-à-vis the "object," which accompanies the transformation of the concept of nature, a rethinking also occurs at the same time as to the selection of the goal of knowledge and the interest of the researcher. Natural scientists, employing ever more modern idioms, explicitly state that it is not their objective and not their intention to gain knowledge of the "essence" of natural objects. They explain that their epistemological intention is to conjoin conceptually the observed or observable, that is, to constitute relations. The requirement is thus advanced—not to employ the bond of unity furnished by 'the activity of nature' itself, but rather, to produce this bond by one's own "subjective" understanding. The most pregnant formulation of this idiom occurs in Kant as he expresses the view that we can know a priori only those unities of nature which we have constituted ourselves. In mathematical physics, which provides the pattern, the knowing and asserting subject avails itself of the "relations" or "functions" of mathematics in order to be able conceptually to articulate nature by means of rules of coordination arranged by the understanding.

This situation influences the subject-predicate structure of the proposition in that now, since the essence has lost its significance and interest, the

18. Compare F. Kaulbach's investigation: "Der philosophische Begriff der Bewegung," in *Studien zu Aristoteles, Leibniz und Kant* (Cologne and Graz: Böhlau Publishing, 1965).

19. Kaulbach, "Begriff der Bewegung," pp. 109ff.

"other" categories, or predicates (expressed in an Aristotelian manner), such as relation and quantity, assume the lead. In addition, these categories are brought in by the thinking and asserting subject, instead of being taken from the 'activity of nature.' That is the intellectual situation on the basis of which predicate logic wins the field. Now the conception of relation, of function, produced by the epistemological subject becomes important as the "proper" subject in the sense of being the groundwork and center of unification. Language can seize upon this principle only if it assigns the position of the grammatical predicate to it. Thus, the predicate wins the leading role in the proposition. This corresponds to the explanation of Galileo in respect to the epistemological interest of the physicist, who has to know of things not "what" but rather "how" they are.<sup>20</sup> Ontology can be conceived of as the science (*Wissenschaft*) of those characteristics which can be grasped from a perspective that is proper from the standpoint of a prescientific (*lebensweltliche*) praxis involved with natural entities. If a corresponding contemporary ontology has created a determinate framework for research in natural science, then a correlative consequence also affects logic: a predicate logic is developed of which Frege may be quoted as being representative.

It is noteworthy that for Frege it is not the distinction between essence and accident, but rather that between "object" and "concept" that sets the standard. The object is treated as dependent upon the concept in the sense that it serves to provide an "instance" for the concept produced by thinking, in relation to which it can complete its work of combining. The relationship of the concept to the object that "falls under it" is conceptualized by Frege according to the model of the mathematical function, which provides open places (*Leerstellen*) into which arguments are to be inserted (*einzu setzen sind*). While the function is treated as analogous to the concept, the "object" subsumed under this concept plays the role of the argument, which serves to occupy the open place of the function or concept. If the concept is characterized as "in need of completion," "unsaturated," or "open," then the role of the object consists in completing the concept by occupying the

20. Galileo expressed lack of interest in the essence when he said that we perceive phenomena as many particulars, but that their "metaphysical" essence remains hidden. (*Tertia Lettera...della Macchie del Sole, le Opera, Nouva Ristampa della Editione Nationale*, vol. 5, 1965, p. 187.) Also compare F. Kaulbach, *Philosophie der Beschreibung*, p. 140. Of the many assertions of modern natural scientists that move in this direction, the passage that occurs in Robert Mayer's letters to Griesinger may be mentioned as illustrative (*Kleinere Schriften und Briefe*, ed. Weihrauch, Stuttgart, 1893, p. 180): "What heat may be, what electricity may be, etc., according to their inner essence, I do not know, just as little as I am acquainted with the inner essence of an element or of some kind of thing in general; however, I do know that I see the connection between many a phenomenon much more clearly than had previously been the case, and that I can provide distinct and well-formed concepts as to what a force is."

open place in the concept, which is interpreted as a function, and making it into a completed form of meaning (*Sinngebilde*), whose linguistic expression is the proposition or judgment. In the proposition "five is a number," the combination of signs "is a number," which has predicative significance (*Bedeutung*), indicates the concept 'being a number'; while the sign "five" represents the "object" that falls "under" this concept. In this proposition <according to Frege's presupposition and>—in contrast to Aristotle's logic of essence—the subject, which represents the "object," plays a dependent role vis-à-vis the predicate, which as the grammatical representative of the concept allows the object as subject to enter its service in order to be made a whole and complemented. This state of affairs warrants my saying that the concept (which is assigned to the predicate position by grammar) is the proper, native "subject" of the proposition, since the concept forms the groundwork that is completed to become a whole predication through the "insertions"<sup>21</sup> of the objects as subjects. In this sense, the Fregian theory of judgment may be declared to be typical of the predicate-logic conception of predication.<sup>21</sup>

The *universal* character of the concept is what principally predestines it to assume by nature the role of the predicate; while the object presents a particularity as the completed, the closed, the definitively established, which entitles it to play the role of the subject. The concept of the "universal" is characterized by Frege by such terms as "open" and "in need of completion," the significance of which show that with this concept he also associates the idea of the *logical requirement* of invoking the particular, the "objectlike," which completes the universal concept in one *act* of subsumption. Thus the action that is expressed in grammatical terms as the "predicating" of a subject is in the language of logic called "subsumption of an object under a concept." In a language that describes the appropriate notational arrangements, one can also speak of this as the "insertion" of the sign for the concept of the object into the open place of the concept-function.

At this point I shall mention that Frege's conception imposes the requirement of effecting a completion in the constructivistic sense. This is clear if one keeps in mind the following situation that Frege has created. The universal character of the concept is not interpreted by him in the sense of

21. Let me call attention to the fact that expressions such as "unsaturated," "in need of completion," "open place," and "insertion" do not properly belong to the level of the concept itself, but rather, to that of the *notational* language, in which the concept (itself interpreted as a function) is symbolized. With regard to such functional notation as  $f(\ast\ast\ast\ast)$ , discussion about the "open place," about the "insertion" of an object,  $x$ , into the open place, and so on—is sensibly and intuitively realizable. Insertability of an  $x$  into this open place can be evaluated as an expression, which, translated into the language of logic, corresponds to the locution: "the containment of the object,  $x$ , under the concept  $F(x)$ ."

the class, or the set, which might be compared to a receptacle that has to take up the particular elements, and of which one would then say, these elements are contained in the set. Rather, through the interpretation of the concept as function, the idea of the principle (always thought of along with this concept) of the *act* of organizing and relating, or en-compassing, is brought in. Just as "arguments" are formed by the function into such a unity that they are arranged by it, for example, as by a rule of construction into a series; so, too, the concept presents the rule according to which the objects contained in it may be displayed in order.

The unifying power of the concept that represents the predicate, which in subject logic was appropriate to the essence-subject, is addressed by Frege, for example, in the following reflections: Think of a sentence such as "three is a prime number."<sup>22</sup> This can be analyzed into two essentially different constituents—into "three" and into "is a prime number."<sup>23</sup> The unifying power of the concept is indicated by Frege as he says that the "parts"—namely, the concept as well as the objects falling under the concept—reciprocally "adhere to one another." The bond, which in subject logic is furnished by the essence and the subject representing it (in order thus to combine the "parts"), is now supplied by the concept: with the help of the concept, the predicate binds the subject unto itself.

If the subject-predicate structure is interpreted in conformity with the model of the function, then it may be seen that the predicate itself binds the complement—which it finds in the subject—to itself, that the "subject 'adheres' to the predicate immediately and does not require any third element as cement." "Three is a prime number" signifies the subordination of the object three under the concept of prime number. The copula

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22. Where a transition is made from the concept to the judgment or proposition, it must be mentioned that the concept is determined by Frege as the function of an argument "whose value is always a truth-value." See G. Frege, *Nachgelassene Schriften*, vol. 1, ed. H. Hermes, F. Kambartel, and F. Kaulbach (Hamburg: Felix-Meiner Publisher, 1969) p. 127.

23. The constituent "three" shows the characteristic of being "self-contained," while the other constituent "is a prime number" is to be designated as unsaturated and in need of completion. In this proposition, "three" is a proper name and its reference is an object. Therefore, it occupies the position of the subject. The predicative constituent, however, has something unsaturated in its reference, whereby the copula "is" is classified as belonging to this part of the proposition. The copula—thus Frege could argue—is signified in the functional notation  $f^{(**)}$ , which represents the concept, by means of the parentheses, which belong to the sign  $f$ . Insofar as the sign itself, as something perceptible, appears as "unsaturated" and "in need of completion," when we are concerned with a function whose argument position is left empty, something unsaturated also corresponds to the sign in the domain of references. "We call it concept. This unsaturatedness of one of the constituents is necessary, because otherwise the parts would not adhere to one another. . . . We can also call this unsaturatedness of the concept its predicative character" (Frege, *Nachgelassene Schriften*, p. 192).

"is"—which belongs to the predicate—brings about this act of unification, whose result is the ordering of the particular under the universal, the object under the concept, the subject under the predicate. In the term "being saturated," the concept expresses its *striving* to assimilate into its domain something that will complete it. For that reason, a name of an object, or a proper name, must be regarded as being incapable of functioning as the grammatical predicate, because it does not possess this unifying power insofar as it is a sign of something completed and established, which does not need to reach out to another.

I thus recognize in the concept, on the strength of its functional character, the property of activity and the act of working for the unification of subject and predicate, concept and object. However, can logic's way of speaking of the "falling of an object under the concept," which expresses the unity of concept and object, grasp this activity of unification? Must not this "falling under," according to our recognized presuppositions, be translated into the language of conceptual *action* and its unifying movement, instead of halting at the level of meaning implied by a mere "being contained"? How must the relationship" between concept and object be conceived if I intend to take seriously the unifying act effected by the concept? The answer leads to *constructivistic* avenues of thought such as those encountered, for example, in the chapter on schematism in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*.<sup>24</sup> What is at issue is that the expression "An object is contained under a concept" should not be understood as meaning the concept is comparable to an empty receptacle in which the objects have to be stored like matches in a box.<sup>25</sup> Frege's theory of the concept as function, and the superseding of the box model that it outlines, becomes complete primarily through the assumption that the concept has to employ the *rule of a constructive act of*

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24. Compare F. Kaulbach's treatise: "Schema, Bild, und Modell nach den Voraussetzungen des Kantischen Denkens," in *Kant: Zur Deutung seiner Theorie von Erkennen und Handeln*, ed. G. Prauss (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1973), pp. 105ff.

25. When Frege, for example, in his "A Critical Elucidation of Some Points in E. Schroeder's *Vorlesungen über die Algebra der Logik*," (*Archiv für systematische Philosophie*, vol. 1, 1895), trans. P. T. Geach, in *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*, pp. 86-106, emphasizes that "the concept is logically prior to its extension" and that he regards the attempt to take "the extension of a concept as a class, and make it rest, not on the concept, but on single things as a mistake," Frege works toward a logic that makes the primacy of the function, or the relation, into its first principle and thus secures the validity of the unifying power of the concept, that is, of the predicate. The path from the "concept of class" to the "concept of function," which Frege took, leads, however, to a situation in which the constructive principle cannot be avoided. (On the not always consistent overcoming of the concept of class by Frege's concept of function, compare E. Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 3, trans. R. Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), pp. 291ff.

intuitive presentation of an object, that is, a "schema." This is what constitutes the concept's functional character. At the level of the language of logic this would mean, for example, that in the proposition "three is a prime number," an act of construction is thematized, in which the number three is to be presented and produced by a rule, which would have to be contained in the concept "prime number" or "being a prime number." This would naturally presuppose that also those mathematical concepts which were up to now thought of as abstractively attained set-theoretic and class structures would now be defined in a new, constructive sense.

In summarizing this conception of predicate logic, I shall reiterate that Frege reconstructed the linguistic subject-predicate structure of the proposition by orienting it toward the principle of relation and mathematical function. He discovered in the universal principle of the concept, which he interpreted as function, some characteristics that show it to be the "proper," natural "subject" in the sense of the "groundwork." However, since all that language offers to the concept is the position of the grammatical predicate, while the role of the grammatical subject is assigned to the "object," the Fregian reconstruction of the structure of the subject and predicate by logic does *not* offer any *justification* for the use that language makes of the subject and predicate. Since the center of gravity now shifts to the predicate, I can speak of a logic of the predicate: the predicate, as representative of the concept, is able to exert its unifying power upon the subject. This idea leads in a direction in the pursuance of which it becomes unavoidable to interpret the relationship of the concept to the object and, in particular, the proposal that the object is contained in the concept, constructively.

The linguistico-critical features, which have been found by the logical reconstruction of the subject-predicate structure, become evident in various reflections of which the following is an example. If language (so argues Frege) makes use of the expression "the concept prime number," then it occasions the impression that what is at issue is a closed, definitive reference (*Bedeutung*) in which nothing unsaturated or of a predicative character is notable. Language "coins a concept into an object," since it can "insert" its designation into its "grammatical framework" only as a proper name.<sup>26</sup> But language thereby perpetrates a falsification. Indeed the word "concept" is itself already erroneous if I consider it precisely. For, conveyed in the predicative form of an unsaturated, functional expression such as "is a concept," the word requires a proper name as a grammatical subject. A contradiction thus emerges, since no proper name may be equated with a concept. A proper name as a sign of an object always belongs in the position of the subject; the name of a concept in the position of the predicate.

The program of a metagrammatical subject-predicate theory with its center of gravity in the logic of the predicate has also been furthered in works by neo-Kantian thinkers. Their guiding intention is conveyed in the

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26. Frege, *Nachgelassene Schriften*, p. 192.

thesis that the logic of the subject has been played out and that it must give way to the construction of the logic of the predicate.<sup>27</sup>

In contrast to these theses, I will here maintain that the logic of the subject is not made obsolete by predicate logic. On the contrary, both conceptions of logic are to be legitimized in conformity with the perspective of the epistemological and linguistic interests from which the object is discussed and conceived; and, depending on the occasion, one or the other conception may lay claim to validity. Support for this view is seen in the debates between the motives of subject logic, on the one side, and those of predicate logic, on the other, which may be observed in the penetrating reflections on linguistic philosophy by modern thinkers. Thus, for instance, I turn to Leibniz, of whom, as one of the fathers of modern logic, one would expect theses predominantly weighted toward predicate logic.

### III

Leibniz's renowned statement "Praedicatum est in subjecto" sounds completely Aristotelian. The question of whether Leibniz chose the side of subject logic or that of predicate logic may be decided along the following lines: Just as in his work as a whole, so here too Leibniz would have envisioned a synthesis between predicate logic as inspired by "universal mathematics"

27. Here besides Cassirer's *Substance and Function* and *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, we should mention Emil Lask's "Die Lehre vom Urteil," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, ed. Eugen Herrigel (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr and Paul Siebeck, Publisher, 1923), pp. 283ff., as well as Heinrich Rickert, *Die Logik des Prädikats und das Problem der Ontologie* (Heidelberg: Publisher of the Winter'schen University Press, 1931). Lask attempts to further the victory of predicate logic in that in conscious opposition to Aristotle, he separates the metagrammatical subject-predicate theory from ontology and makes it into a matter of mere "logic." One would have to interrogate the "semantic structure of the region of judgment in conjunction with the object structure beyond judgment, without leaving the domain of the control of the logical [namely, of the "transcendental logic" of reason—the author]." He interprets the grammatical subject-predicate relationship by means of the guide of the model: content-form (category). Whereas, according to Aristotle, the subject is the self-subsistent and completed essence, here it functions as the "matter" that awaits formation and bestowal of sense by the predicate. The "Doctrine of Judgment" of Lask ("Die Lehre" p. 334) reads: "The underlying ground, the broad basis, the supporter of categorial form, is simultaneously what lies under in the sense of what is subject to, is subordinate to the logical determination, a *sujet* in this sense." Kant's Copernican turn is mentioned as the prelude to that form of logic which I called "predicate logic." The point is thus overlooked that, although one does encounter an intention oriented towards a theory of the predicate in Kant, one also encounters the idea of a subject logic insofar as the role of the grammatical subject is also conceptualized as a representation of the "I think," with the result that an entirely new motive occurs in subject-predicate theory.

and subject logic as supported by the mentality of his "metaphysics of individuality."<sup>28</sup> In thus seeking this synthesis he typically followed a method that one might characterize as making the appropriate choice of a perspective. He describes his method when he says, for example, that "as" mathematician and physicist he wishes to bring into prominence to the very last consequence the principle of mechanics with its categories of relation, function, and so on,<sup>29</sup> but that "as" a metaphysician—that is, from the perspective of metaphysical thinking—he wants to justify such principles as those of essence, entelechy, and monad. His proposition "Praedicatum est in subjecto" belongs to the perspective of metaphysical thinking, and it makes use of the presupposition that the essential being (*Wesen*) of the monad is represented by the propositional subject.

In the above-cited proposition, Leibniz wants to effect a renewal of the Aristotelian conception of subject logic at the level of a new, more radical concept of essential being or substance, which he calls the "monad." The characteristics that introduce essential being into the propositional subject that represent it, and through which it procures for the subject its primacy over the predicate, are conceptualized in a way such that the principle of individual world perspective is the central factor.

The interpretation of the proposition "Praedicatum inest subjecto" is naturally dependent primarily upon what one would like to understand by the "*in esse*."<sup>30</sup> Without going into details, the idiom may be explained as follows. The predicate cannot be conceived of as an independent content, as a content attributed to many particular beings or individual substances; but rather the predicate is supported by its substance, or its subject, and is, as it were, enveloped by it. It cannot arbitrarily "wander back and forth" between the subjects. That is precisely what Leibniz says of accidents, that they cannot arbitrarily "wander" around from one substance to another.

For supporters of the modern conception of logic, it is disconcerting that Leibniz had strongly championed the logic of the subject. They are seeking precursory principles in Leibnizian logic in order to demonstrate that he is

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28. Allusions to D. Mahnke, *Leibnizens Synthese und Universalmathematik und Individualmetaphysik* (Halle: Niemeyer Press, 1925); and on the problem of the subject in Leibniz, consult F. Kaulbach's essay "Subjektivität, Fundament der Erkenntnis und lebendiger Spiegel bei Leibniz," *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* (in memoriam on the 250th Anniversary of the death of G. W. Leibniz), vol. 20 (1966), nos. 3 and 4, pp. 471ff. Leibniz's subject logic is discussed in detail in Aron Gurwitsch's *Leibniz: Philosophie des Panlogismus* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1974), pp. 74ff.

29. His intercession in favor of a consistent relational view of space as opposed to Newtonian absolute space may serve as an example of this. Compare F. Kaulbach, *Die Metaphysik des Raumes bei Leibniz und Kant* (Cologne: Cologne University Press, 1960).

30. Compare also the very skilled interpretation by Otto Saame, "Der Satz vom Grund bei Leibniz," (dissertation, Mainz, 1961). pp. 21ff.

an implicit representative of their form of logic. They also succeeded in this, because Leibniz encompasses both possibilities. In this context, his Aristotelian tendency is to be considered above all, because it is more in need of defense against the intentions of "modern" logic than are the tendencies which of themselves point in its direction.<sup>31</sup>

The metaphysical importance of the subject representing the monad, or the substances—which encompasses and includes the predicate—rests upon the subject taking from the principle of substance the capacity to mirror and represent the world as a whole. Thus results the subject's "breadth": Leibniz speaks of the "infinite extension" of every substance, which "expresses" and represents *everything* and is individualized and limited only according to *how* it attains this expression to a greater or lesser degree of perfection.<sup>32</sup> The measure of the perfection is thus determined by the degree of activity that the substance exercises: the greater the effective activity of the substance, the greater its perfection. This activity is also evident in the subject when it establishes and provides a basis for its predicates, releasing them from itself, and this proving to be self-subsistent, grounding, and permanent vis-à-vis the predicates. This permanence evidences itself in the "relationship" between the substance and its accidents (its inferences) when one recalls that the latter change, whereas the substance that brings them forth and grounds them remains constant. Substance thus not only gathers together the accidents simultaneously ascertained in it, but it is also to be shifted into the perspective of historical time. Each "present" in which it finds itself encompasses the entire past as well as the future. Likewise, one could say that included in the subject is the entire temporally ordered system of the predicates, which can be asserted by the subject in the past and future.<sup>33</sup>

31. Thus, for example, Couturat in *La Logique de Leibniz*, chap. 7, §8, has attempted to prove that Leibniz pursued the idea of a formal theory of relations. Also, Cassirer worked from this idea.

32. Leibniz, *Philosophische Schriften*, ed. C.I. Gerhardt, 7 vols. (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Press), vol. 4, p. 440; or *Discourse of Metaphysics*, trans. P. G. Lucas and L. Grint (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961), p. 26. Here "extension" is not to be understood in the spatial, but rather in the "intelligible" sense, in a way similar to Malebranche.

33. Leibniz, *Philosophische Schriften*, vol. 4, p. 443; or *Discourse*, pp. 12-13: "Thus the term of the subject must always include that of the predicate, so that whoever possessed perfect insight into the concept of the subject would also be constrained to judge that the relevant predicate belonged to it. We can say that the nature of an individual substance or of a complete and all-inclusive being consists in its possessing a concept so perfect that it suffices to conceptualize and permit the derivation from it of all the predicates of the subject that belong to it. By way of contrast, an accident is something whose concept does not include everything else that one can ascribe to the subject of which one asserts this quality. Thus the quality of king, which one attributes to Alexander the Great, if abstraction is made from this particular subject, is not sufficiently permeated with individual reference, so that it is not in a position to

Every true predication has a certain fundament in the nature of things. Even if a judgment is not "identical," that is, even if the predicate is not *explicitly* contained in the subject, it is at least contained in it *implicitly*. And that is the situation the philosopher designates as "inesse," when he says that the predicate is contained in the subject.

Attention will always be focused on the way substance maintains its identity and unity throughout alteration, and remains the same through its "history."<sup>34</sup> The subject behaves vis-à-vis the predicates in a corresponding way. But the decisive and most important argument for the primacy of the subject consists in that it extends its unifying power—with which it maintains its coherence throughout the changes of its history—to the predicates, insofar as the subject generates the predicates in a rule-governed order of succession, which is appropriate to them, and conjoins them into a system. A law of production, analogous to that in the substance, is efficacious in the subject. This law simultaneously unifies what is produced and furthers the historical alterations. In the course of alteration, an inner logical coherence is recognizable by virtue of the substance or subject.<sup>35</sup> For Leibniz, the issue is settled; a unifying movement proceeds from the subject, in which an activity is recognizable, by which the predicates are organized into a system. The "*Certissima natura*" of every substance and every subject is, according to Leib-

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include other qualities of the same subject, nor whatever else belongs to the concept of an individual prince. God, however, who sees the individual concept or haecceity of Alexander, sees in it at the same time the fundament and basis of all the predicates that can truly be asserted of him such as, for example, that he would conquer Darius and Porus; and He even knows *a priori* (and not through experience) whether Alexander's death will be the consequence of natural causes or poison, things we can know only through history." Leibniz is fond of pursuing the theme of the extension of the subject to the dimension of the historical references of the predicates, a dimension that, starting from the present, extends itself to the past and future: "In addition, when we consider well the connection of the things, we can say that all times in the soul of Alexander there are traces of all that has happened to him, and marks of all that will happen to him, just as we find embedded there traces of everything that happens in the universe, although only God is privileged to know them all." *Philosophische Schriften*, p. 437; or *Discourse*, p. 20; reads: "In the concept of Julius Caesar it is contained *a priori* that he will become perpetual dictator and master of the republic and overthrower of the freedom of the Romans, for we assume that it is the nature of such a perfect concept of a subject to contain all that, so that the predicate must be viewed as contained in the subject."

34. Also, *Nouveaux Essais*; or *New Essays concerning Human Understanding*, trans. A. G. Langley (Chicago: Open Court Publisher, 1949), Book 3, chap. 9, §14; Book 3, chap. 10, §30 (example of the shepherd).

35. Thus Guerout speaks of a program of "logicizing the temporal" in his "Substance and the Primitive Simple Notion in the Philosophy of Leibniz," in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* VI (1946): 293.

niz, that each “semper omnia praeterita et praesentia tempora involvit.”<sup>36</sup> Substance, and thus the subject, may count as that which institutes coherence, which “involvit continuatam successionem.”<sup>37</sup>

The contemporary tradition of subject logic asserts itself against predicate logic, which is itself favored by the metaphysics (ontology) active in natural science, and which is involved in a dialectical debate with the subject-logic approach. This tradition of subject logic is also continued in reflections by Kant. His conception of a “transcendental grammar” indicates that he makes a new contribution in principle to the situation insofar as he canonically and essentially extends the ensemble of factors that we had previously considered in terms of the reconstruction of the metagrammatical subject-predicate theory by the subject principle of the “I think” or “I assert” (*Ich spreche*). Here, I can only indicate that Kant assigned to the propositional subject the role of the representative of the acting transcendental subject that asserts, thinks, and acts. His projected “transcendental grammar” would be expected to show how it would conceptualize the “ground” of human language and would also reconstruct the grammatical treatment of “temporal tenses” in terms of an orientation to the principles of action. The present tense, as the present state of speech, thereby acquires a standard-setting role, seeing that both the “past” as well as the “future” attain their linguistic expression from the perspective of the present.<sup>38</sup>

The result of these reflections, appended as they are to Leibniz, is that the modern logic of the predicate is only applicable in cases where the “object” in question is qualified, in conformity with the dominant epistemological interest, to operate as the “argument” of a concept (Frege) as functionally interpreted. That is always the case with “objects” of mathematics and of the exact natural sciences. But if one keeps in mind that, for example, the writing of history—even if one admits its claim to the discovery of universal historical “laws,” types, and configurations of processes—deals with individual persons and their actions as well as spatially and temporally individual processes, then one will concede that the logic of the subject has considerable justification. Seen from their perspective, a program must be characterized as unsuccessful that attempts to constitute a logic of historical narrative exclusively within the horizon of “modern” conceptions of logic,

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36. Letter to de Volder of 20 June 1703. In another letter of 24 March 1699 to the same correspondent, substances are mentioned as the “fontes” of their phenomena, perceptions, and actions.

37. Letter to de Volder of 21 January 1704. On being contained implicitly, see the passage in Leibniz, *Philosophische Schriften*, vol. 4, p. 433; or *Discourse*, p. 12. That the subject is the foundation for the predicate see, Leibniz, *Philosophische Schriften*, vol. 7, p. 309.

38. Kant’s *Werke* (Academy edition), vol. 28, 1, p. 433. A more detailed characterization of Kant’s program of “transcendental grammar” (at which he himself merely hinted) will be available in F. Kaulbach’s forthcoming book: *Das Prinzip Handlung und die Philosophie Kants*.

naturally oriented as they are toward the logical predicate.

Analogous considerations also apply to the logic of philosophical thought and language. Since with objects such as world, truth, science, man, and nature, the position of the thinking and speaking subject vis-à-vis them is fundamentally different from, let us say, that of the physicist, who, for example, makes the probable appearance of an elementary particle at one location into an "object," the philosophical object cannot play the role of an argument in the function of a concept. If one uses the methods of predicate logic to treat philosophical propositions with the intention of doing a "critique" of them, then one necessarily misses the goal one intended to attain.

How the philosophical "object" articulates *itself* in the act of thinking and speaking instead of the thinking and speaking subject having to speak vis-à-vis the object "about" it from a distant "position" in order to grasp it, will be shown in some concluding remarks about Hegel's "speculative proposition."

Let me recall at this point that Hegel distinguishes between "proposition" (*Satz*) and "judgment" (*Urteil*). In making this distinction he requires of judgment, at least according to his intended analysis, that structure valued most by thinkers oriented toward the logical predicate. The judgment, consequently, corresponds to thinking at the level of the "understanding," which sees a "universal determination" in the predicate separating itself from the particular, the individual represented in the subject. The result is that the subject and predicate are given as isolated linguistic elements, which are then connected to one another by means of the copula.<sup>39</sup> While the "proposition" still actualizes a "movement" that begins with the subject and pursues a course over to the predicate and back again to the subject, the "judgment" mirrors what is the characteristic form of reflection—an analyzing and synthesizing technique—in the exact thinking of mathematics and natural science. The "proposition," however, contains "a determination of the subjects, which does not stand to them in a relationship of universality—a state, an individual action, or the like."<sup>40</sup>

Indeed, when Hegel makes assertions about the judgment that imply its assignment to predicate logic, what lies behind this move is the intention of

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39. Hegel, *Werke* (cited according to the Glockner edition), vol. 4, p. 506; or *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers (London and New York: Allen and Unwin and Humanities Press, 1929), vol. 2, p. 36: "For the main distinction between proposition and judgment is this, that in the former the *content* constitutes the *relation itself*, or that it is a *determinate relationship*. Judgment by contrast transfers the content into the predicate as a universal determination, which exists for itself and is distinguished from its relation, the simple copula."

40. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 8, p. 367ff. (§ 167); or *The Logic of Hegel* (from the *Encyclopaedia*), trans. W. Wallace (London: Oxford University Press, 1892), p. 300 (§ 167).

assigning to a subordinate plane both this conception of logic and the "judgment" assigned to it, the two being regarded as an expression of a mentality at the level of the "understanding." By way of contrast, he sees in the "proposition," whose character he conceives as involving a subject logic, a superior linguistic possibility for expressing "thought." Once the "proposition" degenerates into the "judgment," it is "ill fitted to express speculative truths."<sup>41</sup>

The "logic" of philosophical "reason" will not tolerate being confined in the straitjacket of the understanding. With regard to philosophical themes such as the world or God, where the "content is alone determined by the *form* (my emphasis) of thought" it is "not merely superfluous to make these determinations predicates of propositions in which God, or still vaguer the absolute, is the subject, but it would also have the disadvantage of suggesting another standard than the nature of thought itself."<sup>42</sup> The form of judgment, therefore, is ill-fitted to "express the speculative and the concrete—and the true is concrete; the form of judgment is onesided and to that extent the judgment is false." The "truthful," or "the speculative," does not tolerate this "onesidedness" of the judgment, which, for example, tries neatly to separate the concepts of the finite and the infinite and which corresponds to the strict "either/or." In conformity with the subject-predicate structure of the judgment, one may say, for instance, that the world is *either* finite *or* infinite and only one of the two. It does not make sense for thinking and speaking in terms of judgments that the world could be finite *and* at the same time infinite. "The battle of reason consists in overcoming what the understanding has made rigid."<sup>43</sup>

If philosophical reason is influential in the proposition, however, then the subject and predicate are also encompassed by the movement of "thought." "Ratiocinative" thinking—which forms its subjective thoughts "about" the object and speaks about it—takes a subject as a basis for its proposition, in which it, as Kant had already noted, objectifies its own self: the "content" asserted in the proposition is treated as "accident and predicate."

Everyday "understanding" initially suggests describing the procedure of forming propositions as initially using a subject as a "basis" upon which a predicative content is then laid down. The kind of thinking that connects subject and predicate "runs back and forth" under this presupposition between both poles, which it regards as separate and fixed. This model is suggested in those cases in which the subject represents the position of a "finite," particular object. Another situation, however, occurs if the issue is the philosophical proposition, the subject of which signifies an "infinite" object such as man, freedom, or the world. Now the construction of the philosophical thought becomes the standard of the critical evaluation of the

41. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 4, p. 99; or *Hegel's Science of Logic*, vol. 1, p. 103.

42. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 8, p. 105 (§ 31); or *Logic of Hegel*, p. 65 (§ 31).

43. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 8, p. 107 (§ 32); or *Logic of Hegel*, p. 67 (§ 32).

formation of the proposition in language, and the “movement” between subject and predicate signifies an un-folding of what is “inner,” an un-folding of the meaning content of the subject into the predicate and its assimilation into the unity of the subject. In this case, the subject representing the “object” proves to be the essence, which is not the theme of an external process of thinking and speaking, but rather *itself* unfolds *itself* in the proposition as the subject-predicate structure: Here, the subject (in Hegelian terms) emerges as the “concept.” If I choose, for example, the proposition, “Man is the sum (*Inbegriff*) of his actions,” then I find that here the *sense* of this proposition already requires that the subject “man” cannot function as the fixed foundation, upon which all possible predicates are laid down, but rather is conceptualized as movement, history. The subject “man” flows as it were into the concept of his actions, and their sum, in turn, relates back to the subject. In this case, there is no “firm basis” that would otherwise focus “the process of ratiocination on the static subject.” The subject oscillates, and is only the “movement” itself that becomes the object. The subject merges with the predicative content and presents no more than is said in the predicate. Thus the subject cannot “acquire additional accidents” that could be added to the infinite.<sup>44</sup>

The “fragmentation of the content,” which, in the case of an infinite succession of many predicates, would be confirmed, is overcome here, since the predicative content is “bound” by the “self,” that is, by the subject. Here, the predicate is not the “universal, which, free of the subject, belongs to others as well.” The presupposed subject-predicate structure assumed by ordinary logic and grammar is ruptured, since the “content” (which, for instance, in predicate logic corresponds to the predicate as the representative of the universal) retraces its movement back to the subject. The content becomes the “substance,” the “essence,” and the “concept of that about which the talk occurs.” Thinking that follows in an external manner the accidents or predicates is here forced into a movement of “things” themselves and is directed back to the substance, where it is “prevented from escaping.” This kind of thinking experiences a “reaction.” The subject has been “superseded by and taken up into” (*aufgehoben*)<sup>iv</sup> the predicate: it is no longer the “objectlike and ‘rigid’ self,” which as it were remains lying inactive and unmoving upon the ground, waiting for the predicates to be laid upon it. Rather, it sets itself into motion and shifts to the predicate as can be seen in the predicate of the above-cited example, “is the sum of his actions,” which is asserted by the subject “man.” Furthermore, the *position* of the one doing the speaking vis-à-vis the object is not that of the distanced subject that talks “about” its object, rather the thinking, speaking, knowing subject is itself involved in this movement, which makes the transition from the pro-

44. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Preface: Hegel's *Werke*, vol. 2, p. 56ff.; or *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 37.

positional subject to the predicate. Since in this movement the subject of the proposition reestablishes itself out of the predicate, and since this movement is indeed the substance and the essence, the knowing subject can be designated as the "identity" (*Identität*) of the subject and predicate.<sup>45</sup> In this way, the distinction between the subject and predicate in the proposition is not cancelled; rather, both become understandable as different moments of a single movement proceeding from the subject to the predicate and returning back to the subject again.

Because the philosophical proposition is constructed from a subject and predicate like any other proposition, it arouses the illusion of involving the "ordinary" relationship of the subject and predicate as well as the usual attitude (*Stellung*) of the speaker vis-à-vis the object. The ordinary attitude (*Verhalten*) and what it "intends" (*Meinen*) are shown by the philosophical contents (which should enter into the proposition) to lack an essence. "The intention experiences that it was intended otherwise than it intended; and the correction of the intention compels knowledge to return to the proposition, and now to grasp it otherwise."<sup>46</sup> The proposition should express *what* is the truth: it is essentially the subject. But as the subject, it is only the dialectical movement—"this process which creates and directs itself and returns back into itself."

Here I reach a high point in the logic of the subject, as it becomes evident that in the philosophical proposition, the subject is a movement of self-unification, which occurs by means of the subject superseding itself in the predicate in order to acquire its identity at a higher level of significance. The proposition "man is the sum of his actions" shows that the subject "man" is transformed and superseded as the predicate "is the sum of his actions," and it is precisely in this transformation and supersession that the subject is conceptually presented. One might say that the thinking and speaking subject enacts the history of its own thinking and speaking in the speculative proposition insofar as it assertively occasions the self-supersession in the predicate of the initially rigid subject of the proposition and thus simultaneously secures its own preservation. The movement of the philosophical "concept" of man, the movement of the proposition which "consists" of the subject and predicate with the "content" of this "concept," as well as the movement of the one who is thinking and speaking—are identical. This linguistico-logical movement is at the same time the movement of the thinking and speaking subject itself: the *position* vis-à-vis the "object" of consciousness in the realm of philosophical thought is consequently different from that which consciousness occupies when it "defines" the object and, in-

45. By "identity" I do not mean what functions as the principle of analytic judgments but rather a "concrete" identity, for example, a musical theme is the movement of all the notes belonging to it, which are allowed to coalesce into an "identical" whole.

46. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 2, p. 59; *Phenomenology*, p. 39.

dependently of it, performs intellectual processes in order to describe it from a distance as a fixed content and to make predications about it. The latter is the case in the exact natural sciences, for which, not subject logic, but rather predicate logic is appropriate.

But the “dialectical” development, in which Hegel justifies subject logic in the realm of philosophical thinking and speaking, in conformity with the Aristotelian tradition (whereby the justification occurs in the performance of the self-supersession of the enduring “subject”), becomes actualized in those thought processes which found the basis for thought and speech upon the principle of “action.” For example, if one interprets the proposition “*A* is the cause of *B*” in such a way that one conceives of it as a description of an acting efficacy of *A*, then it is necessary to grasp *A* as a subject of which the predicate “is a cause of *B*” is asserted. If one does not want to miss the action-like character of the causality here at issue, then one must treat it in the Aristotelian manner of the logic of the subject instead of conceptualizing it in the sense of a mere functional correlation between *A* and *B*, as has been the case in modern methods and the epistemological interests and goals they pursued.

Finally, in regard to the speculative proposition, an additional comment may be made about the debate between the conceptions of subject logic and of predicate logic. The history of this debate is enacted dialectically in the sense that the advocates of subject logic change the position of the subject and predicate in the proposition and, instead of presupposing the rigid opposition of the two sides, establish the foundation in a movement of supersession of one into the other. Thus, through this movement, the basis is formed for the first time, upon which I am able to give significance to the terms ‘subject logic’ and ‘predicate logic.’

### Translation Notes

<sup>i</sup> I employ the convention of using single quote marks as scope-indicators, plus the German original within parentheses for a first occurrence of a technical term. The German is also enclosed within parentheses whenever context seems to require it in order to eliminate ambiguity.

<sup>ii</sup> I have translated this as well as the other quotations of Aristotle from Professor Kaulbach's German. The interested reader may consult the *Metaphysica* as translated under the editorship of W. D. Ross in vol. 8 of *The Works of Aristotle* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928). Although I have consulted and referenced standard English translations, whenever available, of the texts cited by Professor Kaulbach, I have altered these translations against the German whenever there seemed to be a deviation without warrant from the literal German (irrespective of the language in which the original occurs). This also applies to the texts from Leibniz as well as Hegel cited later.

<sup>iii</sup> The German “*Einsetzungen*,” here translated as “insertions,” might also be rendered as “substitutions” except for the fact that the connotation of replacement might prove misleading in a context where the logical operation in question is Frege’s “subsumption of an object under a concept.”

<sup>iv</sup> Hereafter, the translation of *aufheben* and its derivatives will be abbreviated “supersede.”



Reviews  
and  
Review Articles



## JOACHIM RITTER, *METAPHYSIK UND POLITIK*

Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977. 356 pp.

Stanley Rosen

Joachim Ritter is one of the best-known specialists on Hegel's political thought of the last twenty-five years. The book under review is a collection of eleven essays, all previously published: five on Aristotle, four on Hegel, and two on the topic of "world-civilization." As the subdivisions indicate, Ritter was principally concerned with bringing out the Aristotelian roots of the main themes of Hegel's political thought. This is perhaps less directly apparent in his best-known essay "Hegel and the French Revolution" than in many of the other papers, but it is indirectly visible even there. As the title indicates, it is a pivotal notion of Ritter's that the connection between metaphysics and politics in Aristotle is analogous to that in Hegel. Is this a sound notion? And if it is sound, does it receive an accurate development in Ritter's essays? These questions provide me with an appropriate beginning for this review. It is perhaps initially clear that Hegel was influenced by Aristotle's writings in both metaphysics and politics, and that for Hegel the concepts of politics (for example, natural right, the state, and freedom) are specifications of the concept, that is, of the self-knowledge of the Absolute as articulated within the living or spiritual structure of the Whole. What is not clear is how Aristotle's conception of the relation between metaphysics and politics, as distinct from the relation between politics and ethics, resembles that of Hegel. It might plausibly be argued that the paradigm of an intimate connection between metaphysics and politics is Platonic rather than Aristotelian. The argument might base itself upon the notion of the philosopher-king and the Good in the *Republic*, which combines theory and practice by serving as the principle of the Whole in a quasi-Hegelian sense. Aristotle, furthermore, makes a tripartition of the arts into the theoretical, practical, and productive. There is no common principle for these arts. The

practical art of the statesman (under which ethics is subsumed) is not a theoretical or a productive art, and there is no analogue to Plato's philosopher-king. One might perhaps wish to turn from the *Republic* to the *Statesman*, a somewhat more 'Aristotelian' dialogue than the former, and press the analogy between the Eleatic Stranger's defense of *phronēsis* as the art of the perfect statesman, and Aristotle's political use of that term. However, this course of argument would lead to grave difficulties. To begin with, *phronēsis* does not have the same meaning in Plato as in Aristotle. The term is more comprehensive within the Platonic dialogues, and might best be translated as "intelligence" or just possibly "sound judgement" (but not as restricted to practical affairs in the technical Aristotelian sense). Furthermore, Plato's articulation of the arts and sciences, although possessing the superficial clarity of diaeresis, is altogether more complex and even tangled (to use a Platonic metaphor) than is the Aristotelian articulation.

In the *Statesman*, for example, the political art is an instance of commanding, and, as the Stranger says, all commands are issued "for the sake of some genesis" (p. 261). Hence there is a bond between practice and production, despite the fact that commanding falls under the gnostic arts, which are initially separated from the practico-productive arts. Not only this, but paradigmatic *phronēsis* is not a genuine *techne*, since it is beyond all rules or regular and iterative procedures, whether arithmetical or architectural. Plato thus tends to intertwine theory, practice, and production, even as he is ostensibly dividing theory from practico-production. The situation is not as dramatically visible in the *Statesman* as it is in the *Republic*, but it is nevertheless unmistakable to anyone with the patience to read the dialogue accurately and in its entirety. Hence Plato's procedure seems much closer to that of Hegel than does Aristotle's. As a very preliminary but not misleading formulation, one could suggest that Plato attempts to unite theory and practice within a kind of conceptual production, of which the *techne* of diaeresis may serve as a deceptively simple metaphor. It is not possible to enter into a discussion of the nature of the Good (or of the Idea of the Good) in this context. But it does provide a basis for dialectic understood as a kind of proto-transcendental deduction, which is surely far closer to Hegel's speculative and dialectical logic than anything in Aristotle.

The question raised by the title of Ritter's book, then, is in no sense external to his central theme. If there is a close connection between Aristotle and Hegel, surely it cannot lie within the relation between metaphysics and politics. Or is there some misunderstanding of Aristotle on Hegel's part, which ought not to be repeated by his commentators? One might defend the connection by insisting that Aristotle, despite the tripartition of the arts and the warning against a *metabasis eis allo genos*, implies a connection between knowledge of politics (and ethics) and knowledge of the human soul. On this view, we are led from the *Ethics* and *Politics* (and from the *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*) to the *De Anima* and thence to the *Metaphysics*. This line of argu-

ment has some plausibility, but it can easily be exaggerated into a Platonicizing of Aristotle, or a destruction of exactly that difference between himself and his master that Aristotle attempted to establish. (An analogous error in modern philosophy would be to press Kant into a Fichtean mold, an error presumably committed by Hegel.) In any case, this is not Ritter's procedure. Rather, to begin with a general formulation, he tends to Hegelianize Aristotle and to politicize the result. Ritter sees the link between theoretical science and freedom as starting with Aristotle (p. 11). "The ground of knowledge is 'the divine' (p. 14). Consequently, through the connection between philosophy and religious emancipation, theoretical science acquires an ethical sense" (p. 20f). "The theological theory connects itself, in that it becomes science, with the form of knowledge pertaining to the practical life-world, and has nothing originally to do with the intuition of the divine and theology" (p. 22). In other words, theory has two species: the intuition of the divine, and knowledge of grounds and causes. Theory in the latter sense is science. But science is concerned with the world of the practical and productive life (p. 24). Since the contemplation of the divine is already, or originally, an expression of political life, and since theory in this life is rooted in practico-productive *technē*, "the transition from theory to science signifies that the former attempts to conceive the divine and the ancient, theologically exhibited order, as the order and being of the same world which is already known and revealed in the sciences of political existence and its arts" (p. 25).

In this part of his interpretation Ritter assimilates theory into practice via religion. Theoretical science (the fundamental unity between religious intuition and technical knowledge) shows that the divine cosmic order is not a *Jenseits*, "but is the world already familiar to practical existence and actual for it" (p. 29). Following Aquinas, Ritter concludes that what distinguishes theory and practice "is not their object, but their end" (p. 29). Thus, "the knowledge of the divine becomes the knowledge of the grounds and causes of things because the divine world-order is the world of man in his historical and social existence" (p. 30). Hence, "the 'pure' reason of theoretical science is enclosed (*angelegt*) within the 'practical' reason of the individual and the social" (p. 31). I cannot believe that this Hegelianizing of Aristotle is sound. To begin with, if there is "intuition of the divine" in Aristotle, it certainly has nothing to do with Greek political religion but rather is a human approximation, via eidetic intuition, to the non-eidetic *Noēsis tēs noēseōs*. To the extent that man acquires an intuition of the divine, it removes him from the historical and social world altogether. Whereas the cosmic order is not a *Jenseits*, there remains a disjunction within the cosmos between the human and the divine, and so between religious and epistemic theory on the one hand and the practical and productive arts on the other. Aristotle's regular habit of attempting to explain the working of nature by analogy with the arts does nothing to overcome the bifurcation within the cosmos between the supra-mundane and the terrestrial. On the contrary, it raises a theoretical

difficulty that is neither solved by Aristotle nor noticed by Ritter. Thus the claim that theory and practice are distinguished by their end but not their object, means finally that man is the unity, or unifying principle, of theory, practice, and production, and so of the cosmos. But this amounts to the Hegelian identification (or identity-within-difference) of man and god. Ritter has implicitly combined *noēsis* with 'self-consciousness.'

This strand of Ritter's argument, contained in the opening essay ("The Teaching of the Origin and Sense of Theory in Aristotle") and the basis for what follows, does not support the need for a theoretical foundation of the political art. Instead, it politicizes theory, or assimilates theory into political religion. (Ritter generously includes a summary of critical discussion of his original paper, criticism with which I largely agree.) The second essay ("Aristotle and the Pre-Socratics"), despite its explicit theme, makes the same point in primarily political terms. It will not be necessary to provide an extensive summary of this essay. Suffice it to say that Ritter exaggerates Aristotle's deference to his predecessors or the *opinio vetus* (in a way similar to those who purport to see a 'philosophy of history' in Aristotle) by giving it a specifically political flavor.

"Knowing in the sense of philosophy is preservation of a truth that is always and from antiquity pertinent to man and his arrangements of life. The philosopher has his place from the beginning in the 'state' (polis). What he learns and knows stands in connection with its law and its traditional, i.e., ethical order" (p. 42)

and so on. This is not to suggest that the essay is useless. On the contrary, it is filled with fine and valuable observations, such as the contrast between the methods of Aristotle and Descartes on p. 41. In general, I respond to Ritter's Aristotle-interpretation with admiration for his sensitive delineation of the link between politics and ethics. Yet I must take issue with the nerve of his argument: he reads Aristotle through Hegelian, and hence to some extent through Christian spectacles. This is not without its implications for his interpretation of Hegel, a point to which I shall return later. Ritter is both valuable and frustrating because he leads us toward the insight into the deficiencies of Aristotle's tripartition of the arts or *separation* between metaphysics and politics, even while arguing that these are in fact unified for Aristotle within political, ethical, social, or religious existence. But this argument is unsound. As one could put it, Aristotle does not deduce or demonstrate the unity of the theoretical and practical lives because there is no highest principle or Platonic Good from which to derive that unity. Ritter regularly argues as though the ground of that unity is the polis, hence *nomos* or history. In this altogether untheoretical sense, the point is not even valid for Hegel, let alone for Aristotle.

I can give a suggestive illustration of this mode of argument by citing a point made by Ritter in a footnote to his third essay, "The Bourgeois Life." Ritter quotes remarks by Aristotle to the effect that what everyone agrees

upon must in a certain sense be true (p. 65). He then says: "this Aristotelian conviction is once again taken up in Hegel's assertion that the actual is rational." If Ritter's interpretation is sound, then either Aristotle regarded public opinion as an expression of the Absolute Spirit or Hegel equated *Wirklichkeit* with *nomos*. Obviously neither of these alternatives is defensible. However, let us look at a longer and more fundamental passage in the same essay:

The purpose of the state and its political order is the actualization of human being. But the actualization of this purpose cannot take place in the abstract element of the universal. Politics cannot itself create happiness which it must induce and secure; this remains the task of the individual and his personal life. So the purpose of politics and of the political order extends beyond its domain to the work and the ethical excellence of the individual. Aristotle has shown this limit of political effectiveness in the relation of the philosophical to bourgeois life. The Platonists separated the philosophical life from the state and their bourgeois life because it takes them beyond the political order to a share in the divine. The former must have nothing in common with the latter, but is in relation to it an other. Aristotle does not accept this separation. The life in theory is for him related to bourgeois life as the divine life itself is related to the human (e.g. *Eth. Nic.* X, 7, 1177b31). But this does not justify their separation. For this separation would signify that the state and its political order would be estranged from its own determination. In the separation of the philosophical life, it becomes instead manifest how the fulfilment of the individual life in the state is fundamentally related to the political. The philosophical life is 'no other' but 'the best,' the self-being of man which the state has to actualize, shows itself as extending beyond the state" (pp. 101-02).

This is an important passage from several standpoints. I think it fairly represents Ritter's main thesis with respect to Aristotle. For this reason the passage also shows how Ritter misinterprets his own best insights. First, even while emphasizing the role of the individual in acquiring a happy life, Ritter blurs the distinction between the theoretical and the nontheoretical lives. It is true that politics cannot create happiness, but the contribution made by the individual to his own happiness depends for its degree and nature upon whether or not he is a theoretical man. As Ritter himself emphasizes throughout his essays on Aristotle, ethical excellence is a function of the excellence of the polis. In his desire to politicize philosophy, Ritter is forced to exaggerate the freedom of the individual who is not a philosopher and to minimize the apolitical nature of the perfection of the 'divine' life of philosophy. From Ritter's formulation, the novice might get the impression that Aristotle's philosopher was a civil servant who experienced his unity with the polis in his function as a member of pagan religious cults. For better or worse, none of this is true. Second, Ritter radically oversimplifies the explicit teaching of the Platonic dialogues on the close connection between theory and practice. It may be that Ritter's insight, based upon post-Platonic developments, of the separation between philosophy and political life is sound. But he gives no evidence to support the thesis that this was

Plato's view. Third, Ritter interprets the analogy between the divine and the philosophical lives in a specifically political sense. It cannot be right to say that for Aristotle the divine theoretical life has any relation to bourgeois existence except as the precondition to be transcended. Politics takes care of the body, whereas philosophy is the care of the soul. The last words of the passage just translated from Ritter actually contradict the interpretation he offers of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Ritter indicates that the philosophical or divine life is the "determination" (*Bestimmung*) of the polis. This is the converse of the thesis that the philosophical life is determined by the polis. But it violates the distinction between theory and practice which is the basis of Aristotle's criticism of Plato. Whereas Plato insists, directly and indirectly, that only the philosopher possesses political excellence, Aristotle rejects this extreme unification of knowing and doing and invents (or discovers) political (and not philosophico-political) virtue. Thus for example Ritter's interpretation does not explain why Aristotle advises ostracism of the being who is altogether superior to his fellow citizens, that is, who is divine rather than mortal. Ritter's two theses, taken together, provide the illicit transition from Aristotle to Hegel, implied in his title and stated with more or less explicitness throughout his essays.

Before turning to the essays on Hegel I want to mention one more passage in the writings on Aristotle. In the paper entitled "'Natural Right' in Aristotle," Ritter offers an explanation of a notoriously difficult passage in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (V, 7). Aristotle says here that there is a right by nature which is therefore everywhere the same yet everywhere changeable. Ritter tries to remove this obscurity (if not outright contradiction) by assimilating natural right into the concrete laws and customs of individual city-states. "'Right' is for Aristotle always given in the multiplicity of what in the city as in the 'house' is habit, use, and custom" (*Sitte, Brauch und Gewohnheit*,) p. 159. "For Aristotle there can be no separate and independent 'principle of right,' because for him there is no legislation in the city sundered from Ethos" (p. 160). And finally: "Therefore for Aristotle there can be no separation of ought from is (*Sollen und Sein*), from morality and legality. . ." (p. 163). Ritter's relativization of nature to convention is in accord with his attempt to unite metaphysics and politics in Aristotle. However, since there is no Absolute Spirit in the Aristotelian polis, the result is a dissolution of nature into convention. There is no criterion by which to judge whether a city's laws and collective deeds are right or wrong. Ritter holds in various passages that the polis rests upon or is the exemplification of natural right and the humanity of man (pp. 76, 105, 169, 172) and that natural right "is for Aristotle in general first given with the polis" (p. 166). There is a difference, however, between the actualization of natural right in and by the polis, and the identification of what is right by nature with the uses and laws of the individual polis. If I understand him correctly, Ritter has confused these two theses.

Thus despite Ritter's sensitivity to the details of Aristotle's political ethics, the value of these essays is seriously compromised by the main doctrines of interpretation. If there is a connection in Aristotle between metaphysics and politics, it cannot be explained along Hegelian lines. For this crucial reason, Hegel's acceptance of the Aristotelian doctrine of the political basis of ethics is not a sufficient foundation for understanding the relationship between the two thinkers. The same ambiguity is visible in Ritter's classic essay on "Hegel and the French Revolution." He begins, strikingly enough, with a sharp formulation of the opposite (and correct) thesis to that articulated in the Aristotle essays. He points out that for Aristotle and Aquinas, the philosophical life is divine and to be distinguished from practical knowledge, whereas for Hegel the state and society are an actualization of the divine (p. 186). This point is made in the context of a discussion of Rudolph Haym's criticism of Hegel's political philosophy, but as the context shows (see p. 189), it is also Ritter's view. Ten pages or so later, however, we read that "freedom is thus for Aristotle the capacity of self-fulfilment (*Selbstseinkönnen*) of men, and Hegel takes up this concept" (p. 198). I have already indicated how misleading this claim of linkage is, and will not repeat my objections here. But it should be emphasized that Ritter himself provides all the necessary evidence that shows Hegel's conception of freedom is not Aristotelian at all. It is Christian, historical, and (whether or not as reactionary as Haym claimed) peculiarly modern.

In this respect I quote a crucial sentence from Ritter concerning Hegel: "History itself is the basis upon which the Idea is actual and works; the reason (*Vernunft*) of the time is present in that which is, and theory must bring reason forward out of the time itself as its concept" (p. 218). Is it necessary to say that for Hegel, history is the expression of the Absolute, whereas for Aristotle it is *tychē* and *nomos*? In order to benefit most from Ritter's essays on Hegel, the central thesis of the relation between Aristotle and Hegel must be put aside. The thesis is partly correct: Hegel does conceive of the relation between ethics and politics in a rather Aristotelian manner, and to a certain extent (but not entirely) his conception of political life is influenced by his understanding of Greek cities of the classical period. But Ritter develops his thesis in a seriously misleading way. All this aside, the essay on Hegel's attitude toward the French Revolution stands on its merits. Ritter strikes a persuasive balance between Hegel's criticism of the Revolution and his deeper acceptance of it (pp. 196, 209). He defends Hegel against the charge of being reactionary by reminding us that "political restoration is for Hegel the mere antithesis to revolution," lacking in historical content, a stance that "has forgotten nothing and learnt nothing" (P. 206). Hegel's philosophy of world history transforms and deepens the quarrel between the French Revolution and the Restoration into an analysis of the problem of discontinuity between historical tradition and the present (pp. 211f): "The revolutionary negation of the past and the restorative negation of the present are

thus, in their presupposition of the historical discontinuity of the origin and the future, identical; and this discontinuity becomes then for Hegel the decisive problem of time. . . ." (p. 212). Past and present, as separated, are also connected in their *Entzweiung* as "the form of the modern world and its consciousness" (p. 214). It is not possible to resolve this *Entzweiung* through a rejection of either component (p. 215). On the other hand, the internal separation of past from present is the necessary precondition for modern freedom (p. 229). One may agree with Hegel in his general analysis of the modern epoch even if one rejects (as I would) the specific form of his proposed synthesis. It is not reactionary, as Ritter shows with great sensitivity, to wish to preserve the distinction between state and society, or of historical culture and the emancipation of individual desire, as the mainspring of freedom. If the state is 'socialized,' emancipation suppresses history or tradition, and we return to the level of the worst side of the French Revolution, with only a caricature of its virtues (pp. 229-33).

In the next essay, "Person and Property," I find once again a valuable specific analysis (of private property as the condition for the possibility of substantial ethico-spiritual freedom: see p. 267) marred by misleading analogies between Aristotle and Hegel. Hegel's thesis that freedom and right cannot be postulated apart from the concrete world historical situation (an error committed by the leaders of the French Revolution) is connected (in a long footnote) to Ritter's regular interpretation of Aristotle's derivation of natural right, not from nature but from the specific ethico-political situation (p. 265). It is true that for Hegel nature cannot be grasped as independent from and opposed to human activity (p. 269). Hence freedom (in the Hegelian sense) cannot be deduced from the natural condition (p. 271). But I do not find it helpful to assimilate this line of argument into an Aristotelian context. 'Nature' in Hegel is basically (if not entirely) Newtonian extension; even if *Spirit in potentia*, it must be actualized by human historical labor. But Aristotle's *physis* is not extension or externalization. And even though it must in the human domain be perfected or fulfilled by human work (*technē*), the ends of that work are not produced by man but furnished to him by the natural order. They are in no sense a "product" of history. Aside from this, Ritter skillfully develops the theme of *Entzweiung*, introduced in the previous essay in terms of past and present, as the problem of reification (*Versachlichung*). He shows how the concept of freedom, understood in the modern sense as the mastery of 'reworking' (my term) of nature (an obviously non-Aristotelian notion, I add), leads to the transformation by human activity (*Handeln*) of nature into *Sache* (pp. 273f). But this in turn brings about the reification of all human relations, not simply as a defect to be overcome, but also as the universal principle of bourgeois society (p. 274). Since freedom depends upon the preservation of this society within (and also as partly distinct from) the modern state, reification is the principle of modern freedom. Hegel resolves the deficiency in this modern

principle by arguing that it is combined with the old Roman principle of person (see Kant's ethical and political writings). A person is not a *Sache*, and so can become the *subject* of all 'things' or reified relations within society (pp. 277 ff). As Ritter argues in a long footnote, the difference between Hegel and Marx is that the latter draws no distinction within the bourgeois world between man as producer and the *Sache* he produces (p. 279). This theme is developed in the essay after the next, "Hegel and the Reformation," in which Ritter shows how, for Hegel, bourgeois reification frees the individual from historical religious-ethical ties, and so prepares him to become the free subject of modern right, the state, and society (p. 316). The antecedent essay, "Morality and Ethics," argues that the Kantian distinction between legality and morality is the origin and ground of *The Philosophy of Right* (p. 282). In Kant, ethics, as distinct from *Rechtslehre*, governs the duties of inner freedom (p. 290). Hegel's ethics (*Sittlichkeit*) is developed instead from Greek bourgeois life (p. 292). Hegel reunites ethics and morality in the Aristotelian manner, with the major difference being that he includes modern subjectivity (p. 300). This provides him with an alternative to Kant's subjective ethics. By means of productive activity (*Handeln*), the individual achieves objectivity (pp. 304, 307). I found this a very useful essay, and one in which the reference to Aristotle is more successful and genuinely illuminating than in previous cases. The last two papers contain interesting remarks on the problem of the Europeanization of non-European countries (Ritter taught for some years in Turkey), and on the attitudes of modern and contemporary thinkers toward the 'big city'. This last paper, although not as striking as Benjamin's now fashionable essays on cosmopolitan experience, provides a useful supplement and in some points a corrective to the synthesis of Marxism and romanticism that now passes for political realism.

As will be plain to the reader, I found Ritter's essays on Hegel of greater value than those on Aristotle. This is of course not to suggest that the latter are valueless. I have tried to balance my criticism, which is unfortunately (in this part of the book) of greater weight than my praise, with regular acknowledgement of Ritter's sensitive grasp of Greek political experience, and in many cases, of the nuances of Aristotle's texts. These essays deserve to be read. On the other hand, it is an unfortunate fact of philosophical education in English-speaking countries that specialists in German philosophy no longer receive the training in Greek thought so necessary for a proper understanding of the modern and contemporary German tradition (at least through Heidegger). Needless to say, the converse of this gloomy proposition is also true. How many specialists in Greek philosophy today possess an accurate grasp of the main figures in German thought, and of the contributions by modern German thought to our understanding of the Greeks? At a time when ostensible experts on Hegel are forced to consult secondary sources with respect to the very deep stratum of Greek thought and life in

Hegel, it may not be amiss to warn the prospective student of the unsatisfactory and misleading aspects of Ritter's treatment of Aristotle. And indeed, it is impossible to provide a responsible review of his collected essays without doing so.

There is a further critical remark to be made, which follows from what I noted earlier as Ritter's tendency to assimilate theory into practice. I find a similar imbalance in his treatment of Hegel. It is not enough to say in Ritter's defense that he was a specialist in Hegel's political philosophy. As is clear from Ritter's own interpretations, knowledge of political history is for Hegel the same as knowledge of what the tradition calls metaphysics (p. 185). However, for Hegel, metaphysics is replaced by his own dialectico-speculative logic. Apart from an occasional rather formulaic and conventional expression, there is no treatment in Ritter of the logical essence of politics, and so, once again, the title of this collection of essays (whether or not chosen by Ritter) becomes suggestively enigmatic. If I may make a remark about a thinker of a different order of magnitude, I can perhaps amplify my criticism of Ritter. It has now become fashionable for Alexandre Kojève's great commentary on the *Phenomenology* to be subjected to professorial criticism for its 'anthropologizing' and 'politicizing' interpretation of Hegel. I myself have made a criticism of this kind elsewhere. But it has to be pointed out, especially today in an atmosphere of 'mass-produced' scholarship (in both the technological and ideological senses of that expression), that Kojève provides an extremely powerful articulation of the logical or metaphysical teaching of Hegel. That interpretation may be misguided and exaggerated, but it is on the right track (unlike Ritter's assimilation of Aristotle to Hegel). It *exists* as a permanent reminder of what work is involved in attempting to master Hegel. Many of Ritter's views are much more sensible than those of Kojève. I have no doubt that there are those who would find Ritter's essays to be a 'sounder' introduction to Hegel's political philosophy than Kojève's lectures. I am not one of these persons. There is no frightening work of negativity in Ritter's essays. Perhaps professors need to be frightened as well as trained in the *technē* of accurate textual analyses. In slightly different words, the point of philology is to serve the Concept, not to reduce it either to historical fragments or historicism. If the master-slave dialectic is at work in this context, it can only be to the ultimate purpose of obliterating all masters.

To conclude on a positive note, Ritter's best essays are very good indeed, and will prove of great value to the English-speaking student of Hegel's political philosophy.

## ON STANLEY ROSEN'S REVIEW OF JOACHIM RITTER

Otto Pöggeler

Aristotle, in his effectiveness throughout history, has shown different faces to those who have labored with or drawn upon him in order to propagate their own questions. Thus, the great Neoplatonic commentators learned something else from him than did Aquinas during the heyday of the Middle Ages, and in the Renaissance one made different use of the Aristotelian tradition than during the French Revolution. For German philosophy in the twentieth century, as well, Aristotle was again, of course, in an entirely new way the authoritative "teacher." When, during the years following the First World War, Martin Heidegger transformed transcendental phenomenology into a hermeneutic under the eyes of his teacher Edmund Husserl, he intended to convey his thoughts in a large work on Aristotle, which at that time also was announced. Important for his interest in Aristotle was the sixth book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. He pointed out that here Aristotle discovered *Kairos* and its appropriate context, a discovery which had been radicalized through the world experience of Christianity. Furthermore, in his *Physics*, Aristotle reduced the notion of time, pursuing a certain ontological option, to the concept of a series of instantaneous points. This Aristotle interpretation, regarding the determination of the notion of time, may not hold up on a historicophilological measure. Even so, it reveals Heidegger's approach to the question of being and time. Heidegger's Logic lectures of the winter term, 1925/26, just recently published in his *Collected Works*, shows how he dramatically breaks with his Aristotle approach and tries to develop his plans from Kant's vantage point. On this account, the Aristotle book of Heidegger remained a mere plan.

The reference to Aristotle was kept alive by a younger generation after the Second World War, however, who intended to determine anew the basic task of philosophy. Hans-Georg Gadamer, in order to arrive at his hermeneutic approach, not only referred to a particular phenomenon (for example, that the interpretation of a great work of art is a process which

cannot be concluded, or that the transmitted law has always to be accommodated anew to a situation and thus to be interpreted anew); in *Truth and Method*, he presented the doctrine of Aristotle as regards prudence with reference to situations, and the critique of Plato's doctrine of ideas, with a direct recourse to Heidegger's early lectures and works as a proof of the 'hermeneutic actuality' of Aristotle. Indeed, Hegel turns out to take on an important role insofar as he, unlike Schleiermacher, did not grasp the hermeneutic process as a mere historical reconstruction, but as an integration of that which has passed into that which is present. Hermeneutic and dialectic combine in a way that Heidegger always rejected sharply as an inappropriate mixture. Joachim Ritter himself testified to the fact that, apart from Heidegger's destruction of the metaphysical tradition, he never would have come to the insight that Aristotle and Hegel are the high points of that philosophical tradition by which contemporary philosophy as hermeneutics is yet called to its task. At this point Hegel is accorded a new status, that is, he is considered as the thinker of bifurcation who took seriously the process of historical differentiation. In this way, however, Hegel is played off against a hermeneutics which, as in the case with Heidegger as well as Gadamer, tends to recover an original unity. [Cf. particulars in Pöggeler (Ed.), *Hermeneutische Philosophie* (München: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1972)]. Even independently of this particular phenomenological-hermeneutic tradition, Aristotle and Hegel are accepted as "the teachers," through whom philosophy is lead toward its tasks. Thus, Josef Derbolav has developed a "praxeological" approach in the philosophy of education, which is based upon Aristotle and Hegel [Cf. *Pädagogik und Politik* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1975), and the collection, *Grundlagen und Probleme der Bildungspolitik von 1977* (München/Zürich: R. Piper & Co., 1977)]. In contrast to this, Leo Strauss, within an important American stream of thought, tried to restore political thought through recourse to the conception of order belonging to antiquity. Modern authors, such as Hobbes and, prior to him, Machiavelli, were thus identified as destroyers of this tradition; Hegel completed this destruction by turning religion and metaphysics into ideologies of the self-positioning historical subject. The Hegel interpretation of Kojève, the friend of Strauss, in this connection stands for Hegel himself. This Hegel interpretation should remind us that historicism leads to nihilism and a forfeiture of reason.

Stanley Rosen, in his important works, has participated in the attempt of the Strauss school to restore philosophy by moving from its classical tradition, to "work out" the history of political philosophy, and to examine critically modern historicism and nihilism. Rosen has also devoted an entire book to the examination and systematic differentiation of the approach of Hegel. In his review of Joachim Ritter's *Metaphysics and Politics*, he must of course have been bothered by the fact that the very title of the book seems to suggest an unclear mixture of metaphysics and politics. If we are to search

for a representative who suggests such a combination—Rosen states personally, towards the end of his review—Kojève seems superior to Ritter because, through his frightening negativity he warns us more insistently not to lose sight of the tasks of true philosophy. Yet, Rosen continues his critique in detail and does not remain satisfied with his general position regarding Ritter.

Rosen's decisive critique aims at Ritter's "Hegelianizing" of Aristotle. Thereby arises the problem of erasing the clear difference between metaphysics and politics, as well as of theory, praxis, and poiesis, and of reducing these distinguished aspects to the self-consciousness of freedom which is to produce itself in history. In fact, the Aristotelian politics finds its foundation in Ethics. And as object of inquiry and in its methodological approach we find, indeed, a difference from metaphysics, for the latter views the unchanging and the autonomous, while practical philosophy orients itself to the changeable and dependent. In his objections Rosen can in part call upon discussion notes which have been published alongside Ritter's lectures. In addition, the detailed critique can be extended; for instance, we can ask whether we can presume of Aristotle that praxis for him was institutional and the polis—similarly as ethical life for Hegel—a manifold of institutions which is completed in history. Rosen recognizes, however, despite his critique, the value of Ritter's work; he notes that Ritter has emphasized important aspects and interpreted them in the right manner (for example, that the ethics of Hegel, as is the case in the old European tradition, belongs to civic life and not to "inner" freedom as distinguished from established right, as is the case with Kant). The weaknesses of Ritter's interpretation should in any case not prevent our perceiving the strength of his approach. Thus already Dilthey in his *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaft* has related "the metaphysics of the Greeks" to the "societal historical reality" and pointed out a correspondence between Aristotle's description in his *Politics* and a leading metaphysical position. Thus Heidegger concentrated his focus upon that ontological option in Aristotle which in his opinion concealed and distorted Aristotle's experience. Must there not be an underlying "metaphysical" position in the extended sense of a hermeneutic, when, as is the case in Book ten of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, theory is declared the supreme praxis?

Already in his first essay concerning the teaching pertaining to the origin and sense of Aristotle's theory, which Rosen makes exemplary for his critique, Ritter refers to metaphysics in a way that is hardly that in which Aristotle treats the discipline. Metaphysics as theory should be oriented toward being; "being" (*Sein*) thereby refers to the principle of order of existing beings (*Seienden*), i.e., of the world order. Ritter can impute such a theory of being to Aristotle because Aristotle separated the realms of theory, practice, and making (*Poiesis*). Since he explicitly takes up the empirical disciplines and technical practical knowledge in this context, Ritter can impute to Aristotle

theory as insight into causes (*Gründe*) and place this kind of theory in contrast with theory as mythology, which then becomes a task for poets. In this way Ritter arrives at his own interest: theory is oriented toward being and this means toward world order, seeing that it underlies a progressive differentiation; for example, at the time of Aristotle, it was philosophy and science as well as mythology and poetry. A hermeneutical philosophy must recall the level of differentiations as the specific historical fundament from which it proceeds. Hegel stands along side of Aristotle as the second great initiator of such a hermeneutical philosophy, because he grasped in thought the difference between bourgeois society in his new sense and the state, and thereby did justice to post-revolutionary modernity at one decisive point.

If Ritter seeks a measure out of the bitter experience of our time for the distinction between right and wrong or justice and injustice and discusses the rehabilitation of natural right proceeding from Aristotle, he precisely does not want to maintain the traditional distinction between natural or reasonable right, on the one hand, and positive right, on the other, which, for instance in Scheler's and Hartmann's teaching concerning the ideal being of values, has cast a pale and powerless after-glow into the 20th century. Political science today does not take the metaphysical presuppositions into account upon which Christian Wolff still based the right of reason and religious assumptions. In this situation of bifurcation, however, Aristotle should show that natural right as well as positive right must be related back to the constitutionally ordered life of the city, ever newly differentiated in history. In acknowledging this life-dynamics, philosophy becomes hermeneutical. Political philosophy, so wrote Ritter (S. 177f), "then recognizes that philosophy is able to grasp right as natural only in the manner that it interprets the actuality that underlies the prevailing positive right, with an orientation to that which this actuality is in itself as an actualization of human existence. Human nature is the concept and principle of positive right, which nature was for Aristotle the life of the city ethically conceived and now consists in the actual I (*Dasein*) and being (*Sein*) of man, which has its order in the bifurcation in society, city, and right." When Hegel in 1800 again took up the review of his writing on the positivity of the Christian religion, he stood in a similar situation: he wished to overcome the distinction between the religion of reason and positive religion in its abstractness, as he himself had once drawn it. As Aristotle in his critique of Plato, Hegel also at that time maintains that living nature is ever something different from the concept of nature; what for the concept is mere modification, pure accident, and superfluous, is precisely what is living. It is precisely this Hegel, who sets life in its historical dynamism over against the abstract concept and then sets "hermeneutically" understood connections back into the dynamics of life (*Lebensvollzug*), that Ritter in his reception develops further: he takes over the essential concept of "bifurcation" of the "Differenzschrift" of 1801. Indeed, Ritter had always spoken out decisively

against moving from early stages of the development of a thinker; he is also concerned with that concrete hermeneutic of the modern world which Hegel presented in his *Philosophy of Right*, then in the *Philosophy of Religion* and *Aesthetics*. Ritter, however, had never principally oriented himself on the *Phänomenologie* as a transcendental history or on the dialectic of the *Science of Logic*; the hermeneutics which Ritter still draws from *The Philosophy of Right* of 1820 follows a "logic" which belongs more to the early Hegel.

Therefore it is indeed philosophically-historically correct to maintain with Rosen, in opposition to Ritter, that (the late) Hegel's metaphysical politics is very much nearer to the position of Plato than to that of Aristotle; but this historically correct reference fails to take account of the specific interest of Ritter. For Ritter the matter does not turn upon a philosophical-historical effect "to bring out the Aristotelian roots of the main themes of Hegel's political thought." For Ritter, Aristotle and Hegel had rather made standard-setting decisions in establishing the form of philosophy, which today induce us to develop philosophy as hermeneutics. What is decisive for Aristotle then, however, is precisely the critique of Plato, for example, the emphasis upon the situation-boundedness of the *Phronēsis*. If Heidegger in his early seminars is said to have explained during a discussion of *Phronēsis*: "This is conscience!" then one can philosophically-historically refute such outbursts (although they indeed tie into discussions in Thomas and were foundational for *Being and Time*). With this, however, the question is not completely covered as to what becomes of philosophy when it refers to the situation, or even to the time (*Kairos*), and with this also to history. From situation-boundedness as Aristotle discussed it in relation to prudence (*Klugheit, Phronēsis*), a way leads to history as Hegel had experienced it. How much Hegel distanced himself from Plato shows itself in his discussion and critique of the teaching of the king of philosophers; it is, according to Hegel, only by the tortuous, gradual way of history that reason comes to actualize itself. In identifying the actual and the reasonable, as Hegel did with respect to his own time, he may again have succumbed to a metaphysical illusion, which Ritter did not take over in his hermeneutics. Therefore one could speak not only of a Hegelianizing of Aristotle by Ritter, but of an Aristotelianizing of Hegel as well. Thus there can be no doubt that Hegel himself (at least in his ripened systematic thought) thought otherwise than Ritter says he had done. If philosophy comes to be serious—so he said—nothing is more worthy than to conduct a course of lectures on Aristotle. Philosophy is serious, then, when it takes up dialectic and thus the concept of absolute knowledge. Thereby, however, the Aristotelian distinction between metaphysics and politics or between *apodeixis* and dialectic is in fact again retracted in favor of a Platonic position. Following Ritter's conviction, this apparent seriousness failed in the actuality in which we are situated, which conviction he believed he shared with Aristotle. Even within

his school there are, then again, various paths that have been taken: Günther Bien introduced Aristotle as the founder of political or practical philosophy from a hermeneutical position. In his book on Plato, Reinhard Maurer believed that the all-too-soft hermeneutic was to be evaded through the return to a "transcendental" politics in the sense of Plato; an entire spectrum of various works on Hegel showed that Ritter was an academic teacher for whom effective teaching counted for more than the pursuit of published formulations.

Stanley Rosen considers the last essays in the volume of collected essays, *Metaphysics and Politics*, on the problem of "world-civilization," as more than merely an appendix to studies in the philosophy of history on Aristotle and Hegel. If one inquires about Ritter's own philosophical approach and the way he was lead to university politics through his hermeneutic philosophy, one could consider these particular essays as occupying a key position. For what Ritter had experienced during his teaching activities in Istanbul in the fifties can be observed today in a more advanced form, especially in various Islamic countries: Europeanization, namely, the entry into the world civilization principally formed by science and technology, cuts the people off from their own origin. Not only the traditionalists, but also those who had been disappointed by the emptiness of our world-civilization (that is, those who had studied in Europe or the United States), have by way of a radical antithesis taken recourse to traditional relations. Such a Europeanization has turned out to be a problem for Europe itself, seeing that also Europeans have been cut off from their respective traditions through world civilization. Questionings of this sort lead to the specific philosophical approach of Ritter: only in an ever renewed attempt at differentiation, in the grasping of bifurcations, can we hold on to what used to be a unity (for example, theory as myth and logos, community as state and society, art as a ritual and aesthetic event, etc.). The six essays of Ritter's collected volume, *Subjectivity* (1974), work out this thematic within the context of topics of great practical relevance ("Subjectivity and Industrial Society," "The Task of the Human-sciences in Modern Society," "Landscape"). Ritter shows, by not giving the respective volume of essays the proximate title "Subjectivity and Society," that he did not want to be misread and confused with that mixture known as Marxism and romanticism, which today—as Stanley Rosen remarks—passes itself off as political realism. Or at least it did so yesterday.

At this point, of course, one must ask Ritter whether he shaped hermeneutic philosophy in such a form as would be able to survive under the conditions of the modern world. The substantial contents of tradition, for instance, religion, should in their bifurcation from the world of science and technology be sustained in "Subjectivity." Would they not thereby be extradited to the powerlessness of inwardness? Is bifurcation in such pure form as Ritter attempted philosophically to lay hold upon it to be found anywhere

in historical actuality? If Ritter, for example, in opposition to romantics and nostalgic people, refers in a positive way to the "great city," one must inquire sceptically as to whether there is such a thing as "the" city. Of course, there is the city of the ancient Orient, the city of the Greeks or the city of the Romans, the cities of upper Italy and the business centers of the northern European tradition in the middle ages, etc. Even so, the great and big city seems to be a philosophical abstraction, whether one, like Nietzsche, takes no note of it, or, like Ritter, attempts to present a meaningful interpretation of it. When Ritter presents Hegel as the thinker of the French revolution, then the reference is to "the" revolution, in which the French political, the English industrial, and the German intellectual revolutions are brought into a unity. For Hegel's conception of an "existential" or "corporative" representation is quite contrary to the national representation in the sense of Sieyes and the various outlines of a French constitution. If in the revolution, which Hegel is supposed to have grasped in thought, the sphere of society is separated from that of the state, then also according to Ritter, the society that divides labor following the classical English national-economy is considered an unhistorical system determined by natural laws—a dogmatics that cannot be maintained. Questions of this sort finally lead to the basic question as to how philosophy can today be at all true to its task. Hermeneutic philosophy has developed different kinds of approaches, amongst them that of Ritter. If it is confronted with the approach of Leo Strauss, then it is once again in its entirety placed in question. Confrontations in the sense of the dispute here found necessary have, however, hardly yet begun. Stanley Rosen's critical remarks on Ritter's work are a first step.

### Reply to Otto Pöggeler

I am grateful to Otto Pöggeler for his interesting and informative response to my review of Joachim Ritter's *Metaphysik und Politik*. Pöggeler brings out valuable aspects of Ritter's work as a writer and educator that supplement my own approach. If I have understand Pöggeler correctly, he grants the accuracy of my criticisms of Ritter from the standpoint of the history of philosophy, but regards them as either unfair or at least in need of qualification and supplementation from the standpoint of Ritter's hermeneutical intentions. It therefore seems superfluous to repeat the main points of my criticism of Ritter. On the other hand, it is difficult for me to reply to the issue of hermeneutical intention, because I am not yet sure I understand the distinction between a hermeneutical and a historical or scholarly reading of philosophical texts. Perhaps the two points intersect with respect to the role of the *polis* in Aristotle's teachings. In this case, I of course appreciate the wisdom of the interpretation of *phronēsis* offered by H. G. Gadamer as well as Ritter, and to which Pöggeler, I take it, subscribes. This interpretation differs from that of the "Leo Strauss school" (to use Pöggeler's expression) on only one important point. For the Strauss school, nothing is gained by attempting to understand the unity of life, as conceived by Aristotle, as *historical*. Even granting that, for Aristotle, philosophy is the highest *praxis*, and hence a form of political life, it is still true that philosophy transcends the *polis* and thereby provides the *logos* of political life. Thus, whether or not some aspect of the *polis*, or of political life, is "historical," the *eidos* of the *polis* cannot be. Thus too, even if there is a road of development (whether this be toward a superior or inferior understanding) from Aristotelian *phronēsis* to the modern notion of *Geschichte* as employed by Hegel, the fact remains that the terms are quite distinct. When one has spelled out the history of the transformation from one term into the other, one has not shown that the two terms possess a common essence. In one more formulation, the "concept" (if that is the right word) of the *polis* is radically ambiguous. It was no doubt a paradigm of existential unity for the Greeks, and so too for Aristotle. But Aristotle speaks as a philosopher, not just as a Greek. The *polis* is not yet a paradigm of theoretical unity.

If my remarks on Ritter initiate an *Auseinandersetzung* with the hermeneutical school of philosophy, allow me to take one more step. I ask a question of Otto Pöggeler. "Hermeneutical" as it is used in his response seems to refer to the intention of applying philosophical texts and doctrines to the resolution of political and social problems contemporary with the hermeneuticist. I can understand this intention; it is, as Leo Strauss pointed out constantly, a fundamental feature of the history of philosophy. However, this "rhetorical" (if I may so call it) application of philosophy is one thing; an accurate understanding of philosophy would seem to be

another. Or is it the case that the hermeneuticist denies this distinction? That is, does he maintain that there is no accurate understanding of philosophical writings independent of the student's historical situation, and so of the needs that emerge from the political and social determinants of that situation? Let me emphasize that I do not reject this possibility out of hand. And here I must distinguish myself from the "Leo Strauss school," not out of any disrespect to my late teacher, but because I want to speak on my own responsibility. In so doing, I can allude to Strauss, and note that in *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, in an essay on how to read the *Kitab al Kuzari* of Jehudah Halevi, Strauss hints at a position which is not totally different from that of Heideggerean hermeneutics, or at least from Gadamerian hermeneutics. I draw the following inference from that essay, which I do not attribute to Strauss: the truth in any given generation is what the wisest man of that generation says. This principle is not altogether unrelated to the Heideggerean doctrine of the epochal *Seinsgeschick*. However, it differs in an important respect. Whereas it is obvious that how the wise man formulates the truth will be conditioned by the circumstances of his time, I do not regard it as obvious that what the wise man says is conditioned by, or the expression of a perspective within, his time.



# ON QUINE'S THESIS OF ONTOLOGICAL RELATIVITY\*

Rüdiger Bittner

Translated by Beate von Koschitzky

"What makes sense is to say not what the objects of a theory are, absolutely speaking, but how one theory of objects is interpretable or reinterpretable in another."<sup>1</sup>

## I

I am assuming here that this assertion of ontological relativity is not itself to be understood as an ontological thesis aiming to determine the meaning of the predicate "exists" or the extension of the "really existing." The relativity asserted is primarily a relativity of reference: it indicates a condition for possible answers to questions as to what the objects are to which the statements of a theory relate. When Quine introduces his thesis as "a relational theory of what the objects of theories are" (OR, p. 50), the combination "the objects of theories" should be stressed. It is a question of making the relation of theories to objects explicit. Given a theory, what objects is it talking about?

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\*Translated from "Zu Quines These der Ontologischen Relativität," in *Neue Hefte für Philosophie*, Heft 8. *Semantik und Ontologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1975), pp. 51-64.

This article inquires after the meaning of Quine's thesis of relativity of reference. The key to an understanding of this thesis is the distinction between the situations of radical translation and of speaking in one's own language. Reference is relative because it cannot be verified in the former case, but is accomplished in the latter. Hence, relativity counts against a theory of meaning in naturalistic terms.

1. Willard Van Orman Quine, "Ontological Relativity," in *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1969), p. 50 (cited hereafter as OR).

This bears upon ontology indirectly, that is, by way of the idea of “ontological commitment”: a theory commits itself to the supposition of the existence of a thing if and only if this object has to be reckoned among the entities over which the variables of the theory range in order to render its sentences true.<sup>2</sup> Simplified for our present purpose, this means that a theory assumes the existence of those things to which its statements refer. To this extent the question of reference—what are the objects to which the statements refer?—is also an “ontological” one, asking for the ontology of the theory in question.<sup>3</sup> However, it is not my intention to pursue the ontological side of the question, but to elucidate what the asserted relativity of reference means.<sup>4</sup>

## II

In his recent paper on “Quine and the Correspondence Theory,” Hartry Field proposes the following explanation: “To say that a term *T* used in one language signifies the set of rabbits, relative to a translation manual *M*, is in effect just to say that *M* translates *T* as ‘rabbit.’ ”<sup>5</sup>

According to Field, the relativity thesis quoted at the beginning of this chapter suggests such an explanation. But relativity of reference, so conceived, would not make sense; for the given explanation fails to distinguish between using and mentioning a word, the first part of the equivalence speaking about rabbits, the latter part merely about “rabbit.” Still, he continues, one may correct the mistake: “To say that a term *T* used in one language signifies the set of rabbits, relative to a translation manual *M*, is in effect just to say that *M* translates *T* as a term *T'* which signifies the set of rabbits.”<sup>6</sup> In this case, however, the notion of relative reference would be defined by means of absolute reference which it was intended to replace. — so Field.

It appears, then, that in the notion of relative reference, relativity and reference cannot be conjoined. We may make reference relative to another language. According to Field, that would mean substituting its predicates for those of the original language, say “rabbit” for *T*. But then justice is not done to the fact that the term is supposed to refer, even though in a relative

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2. See Quine, *From a Logical Point of View* (New York: Harper & Row, 1953), p. 13 (hereafter cited as LPV).
3. Again, “what is under consideration is not the ontological state of affairs, but the ontological commitments of a discourse” (LPV, p. 103).
4. I am using the word “reference” in a broad sense, including the relation of a name to its bearer, the relation of a predicate to the things of which it is true, and the relation of a variable to the objects over which it ranges. In all these cases, I use “denotes,” “signifies,” and “relates to” synonymously.
5. Hartry Field, “Quine and the Correspondence Theory,” *Philosophical Review* (April 1974): 206.
6. This is not Field’s phrase. It is a modification of his sentence (4) on p. 206 so as to make it correspond to the first one quoted.

way, to objects such as rabbits. Or we may add expressly that the substitute notion denotes exactly what the replaced term was meant, if only relatively, to denote. But then the detour over relativizing becomes superfluous, and we could say straight away what the term means.

Yet, the concept of relativity underlying this criticism cannot be the one presented in Quine's text. Field's concept of relativity is confined to mere substitution of the referring term. This, however, does not signify relativity of reference itself. It only concerns the antecedent or first term. But what Quine wants to say is that "reference is nonsense except relative to a coordinate system" (OR, p. 48)—reference itself must be considered relative, not only the referring term. So the dilemma turns against the criticism itself. It is hardly surprising that the designating function of a term is either passed over or left untouched by a relativization that affects only the referring expression.

### III

However, Quine writes: "When we ask, 'Does 'rabbit' really refer to rabbits?' someone can counter with the question: 'Refer to rabbits in what sense of 'rabbits'?' thus launching a regress" (OR, p. 48). Thus relativization concerns that part of the sentence which designates the object referred to by the term in question, not the term itself. For the denotation of the object referred to refers for its part, thus inviting another question concerning the object denoted by it. The question, as well as the corresponding answer, however, already uses a "background language," as Quine calls it. Only in relation to such a background language does it make sense to speak of the reference of an expression.

This view is also suggested by the following paragraph: "What makes ontological questions meaningless when taken absolutely is not universality but circularity. A question of the form 'What is an F?' can be answered only by recourse to a further term: 'An F is a G.' The answer makes only relative sense: sense relative to the uncritical acceptance of 'G.'" (OR, p. 53)

Perhaps it would be better to speak here of a "spiral" instead of "circularity": the play of question and answer always leads to the same situation with every new term. Still, the point is clear. To make reference relative is not to translate the referring term by another; rather, again an object referred to is determined within, and by means of, a background language, by the expression that is to denote the object referred to by the first language. For example, "Kaninchen" denotes rabbit, with "rabbit" referring to rabbit, and so on.

But, if the relativity theory intends to say no more than that determination of the object referred to by an expression is only possible within the framework of a background language and thus makes sense only relative to

it (the reference of its expressions, in turn, being either uncritically accepted or expressly questioned, which latter course leads to the same situation again), then the thesis is trivial. That a designation of the objects to which a theory refers makes sense only as an interpretation of that theory within another means then nothing more than that in designating them one is again using a language, and one such as permits reference to the expressions and objects of that theory. But who will doubt this? On the other hand, "to say what the objects of a theory are, absolutely speaking," which, as the relativity thesis asserts, does not make sense, would be a statement about reference, which would not itself be supported by the referential apparatus of a language for the denotation of the intended object, but which would put forward the object itself, so to speak. But there needs to be no theory of ontological relativity to tell us that there are no such statements.

#### IV

It could be objected that these efforts are inadequate because they proceed from an inappropriate concept of interpretation. For Field, interpreting one theory in another simply involves substituting the terms of one for the terms of the other. The trivial form of the thesis gives the interpretation of one theory in another such a wide meaning, that it even includes speaking in one's language of the objects of a theory. But the most obvious thing to do would be to take "interpretation" in the usual sense of the theory of models, that is, as a specification of the range of values of the variables, of the objects denoted by names (if there are any), of the extensions of (one-, two-, . . .  $n$ -place) predicates; these objects or sets of objects being specified within the field of the new theory, if there is an interpretation of one theory in another.

"To say what the objects of a theory are" is an interpretation in this sense: Such an interpretation states distinctly what the objects of a theory are. The relativistic thesis then seems to mean that it does not make sense to interpret a theory, absolutely speaking, but only to interpret one theory in another. Would this mean that we should not say that arithmetic deals with numbers, but that it deals with certain objects of set theory? Surely this is not intended. Actually, Quine takes both of these statements to be in the same situation, both of them interpret one theory in another. Here one of Quine's main points should be recalled, his denying a strict difference between language and theory.<sup>7</sup> To say that arithmetic deals with numbers is to inter-

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7. See Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," in LPV, pp. 20-46; and explicitly in his "Reply to Chomsky," in *Words and Objections*, ed. Davidson and Hintikka (Dordrecht: Reidel 1969), pp. 302-11, especially pp. 308-11. See also Raymond Geuss, "Quine und die Unbestimmtheit der Ontologie," in *Neue Hefte für Philosophie*, no. 8 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), p. 37.

pret this theory in another, that is, in the one contained in our language. See Quine's phrase, "relative to our own words and relative to our overall home theory which lies behind them" (OR, p. 51). But if this already counts as interpretation of a theory in another, then we are back with the trivial reading, and the concept of interpretation is actually as broad as it was there.<sup>8</sup> It is obvious that information about objects of a theory uses our language and thereby, following Quine, the theory contained in it.

## V

Perhaps these attempts of an explanation lead to a trivial thesis, because they neglect what is in fact the reason for maintaining relativity, namely the indeterminacy of translation. Quine's argument on this point can be summarized as follows<sup>9</sup>

1. In the case of radical translation it cannot be unequivocally determined what the terms of the remote language refer to, for instance, whether they refer to rabbits or to their parts (thesis of indeterminacy).
2. The same is true for someone else's utterances in the home language. ("Radical translation begins at home," OR, p. 46.)
3. If in principle it cannot be determined what a term refers to, there is no objective fact of the matter in question. (A principle of verification, see the formulation, "It is indeterminate in principle; there is no fact of the matter," OR, p. 38.)
4. If in the case of someone else's utterances in the home language there is no fact to be cited in reply to the question as to what the terms refer to, the same is true in the case of our own utterances. (Behaviorism: "No private language," OR, p. 47.)
5. Statements or questions as to what a given term refers to do not make sense. (Conclusion)
6. Within a language, with the help of its logical and nonlogical terms, we can refer meaningfully and distinctively to objects. [Fact. "Relative to it (this network of terms and predicates and auxiliary devices) we can and do talk meaningfully and distinctively of rabbits and parts, numbers and formulas," OR, p. 48.]
7. The determinate reference of terms is relative to a language. (Conclusion from items 5 and 6. "Reference is nonsense except relative to a coordinate system," OR, p. 48.)

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8. In his "Reply to Chomsky" Quine explicitly notes: "In 'Word and Object' and related writings my use of the term 'theory' is not technical" (p. 309). Presumably this is true also of his use of the term 'interpretation.'
9. I do not enter into the particulars of the thesis of indeterminacy of translation, but take it for granted. For references to the extended discussion on this point see Manley Thompson, "Quine and the Inscrutability of Reference," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 26 (1972): 42-62, especially p. 43.

## VI

Steps 3 and 4 may be questioned. As far as I can see, the principles of verificationism and behaviorism, used here in a variant meaning that must be more closely specified, are not argued for by Quine but simply decided upon. That by not accepting step 3 one is subject to the "myth of the museum,"<sup>10</sup> is an objection that in fact only enlarges the museum of myths in which Anglo-Saxon philosophers lay their opponents to rest. But the decisive difficulty in the present context results from steps 5 and 6. How are they supposed to stand together?

For if, according to item 6, within a language we can refer meaningfully to determinate objects, it should also be possible to state explicitly in a language what the terms refer to. This presupposes only that the language in question has devices for referring to terms, its own or foreign ones. This is a condition that languages, at least natural languages, generally fulfill. If by using the English word "rabbit" we refer distinctively to rabbits and not to their parts, there is no reason why we should not state explicitly that the word "*Kaninchen*" or just as well the word "rabbit" really refers to rabbits. However, step 5 claims that there is no fact that could be the matter referred to by such a statement, and that therefore it is meaningless. Steps 5 and 6 seem incompatible.

## VII

This contradiction is the critical point of relativity of reference. The question posed: what objects is a given theory talking about? (refer back to section I), seems at first (upon unbiased consideration) to be a silly question. It will be replied that this depends upon the theory; arithmetic, for example, talks about numbers, geography about formations of the earth. At any rate, here there is no problem, for the sentences themselves tell to what they refer. In a sentence like "Mont Blanc is 4,807 meters high," the term "Mont Blanc" designates precisely Mont Blanc, and the predicate "4,807 meters high" refers to all heights of 4,807 meters.

In such an explanation use is again made of the referential means of our language—that was the triviality that the theory of relativity so far arrived at. But this fact does not limit our ability to understand each other when we refer to objects or to explicitly reach agreement about the references of certain terms in cases of doubt. On the other hand, we could feign ignorance and look at a sentence from without, as it were, considering it merely as some linguistic sign of unknown meaning. Then we would have to find out the reference of terms—for example whether "Mont Blanc" refers to Mont Blanc or to something else—by observing empirically the speakers' behavior.

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10. See Quine, OR, pp. 27-29; Field, p. 202, shares his opinion.

Under these circumstances, to ask for the object referred to by a term becomes a silly question for the opposite reason: the indeterminacy of translation makes it in principle impossible to answer. Steps 5 and 6 contradict each other precisely because they are based on these opposite situations. The contradiction disappears as soon as they are included in the statements as conditions.

## VIII

The argument leading to step 5 assumes a situation of radical translation. Radical translation means translation that relies neither on prior dictionaries and grammars nor on etymological and cultural relationships, but rather solely on the empirical material of the speaker's behavior in certain situations.<sup>11</sup> So on the one hand we have linguistic elements the meaning of which we do not know; on the other hand things or events in the world. For instance, we have on one side the word "gavagai" and on the other side the real rabbits. The referential relationships between certain elements of one side and certain elements (or sets of elements) of the other are then to be determined by observation of verbal behavior in certain situations. It is, for example, to be determined whether the word "gavagai" refers to the set of rabbits, or to the set of undetached rabbit parts, or to something else. From the standpoint of a more traditional philosophy of language this task would be rejected from the start: By its nature, reference could not be determined in this way since behavioral dispositions of speakers is not all there is to the meaning of linguistic expressions. Actually, Quine in fact does come to the conclusion that reference cannot be determined in this way. However, instead of rejecting the approach from the outset by a priori reasons, he gives an example to demonstrate the factual impossibility of implementing the program. The references of expressions cannot be determined unambiguously; in each case reconstructions can be proposed that do equal justice to the empirical evidence and yet assign other references to the expressions.

That is the thesis of indeterminacy; step 1 of the argument. The further steps show, however, that this very task of relating linguistic elements as terms referring to things in the world as to their objects, on the basis of verbal behavior, can neither be completely solved in the case of someone else's utterances in the home language nor even in the case of one's own utterances. For the first case Quine gives the following reason: Even utterances of other persons speaking the same language need not be translated into the same expressions in our idiolect; we rather reconstruct them. Sometimes using the same expression is reinforced (in the case of learning the language), sometimes using a different expression is reinforced (in the case of confu-

11. See Quine, *Word and Object* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1960), p. 28. Also OR, p. 45.

sion, for example), but between these there is a whole series of cases where neither kind of translation bears any particular advantage. As Quine states:

"Here, gratuitously, we can systematically reconstrue our neighbor's apparent references to rabbits as really references to rabbit stages, and his apparent references to formulas as really references to Gödel numbers and vice versa. We can reconcile all this with our neighbor's verbal behavior, by cunningly readjusting our translations of his various connecting predicates so as to compensate for the switch of ontology."<sup>12</sup>

In the case of my own utterances we get a corresponding result by simply applying the behavioristic principle: Everything I say of myself I must be able to say of others. Now I can never determine the references of the utterances of others. Hence, I cannot determine unambiguously the references of my own utterances either.

The substantive step thus concerns the terms used by other persons speaking the same language. And there the quotation shows that Quine is assuming the theoretical situation and task of radical translation. Only the linguistic behavior of the "neighbor" is given; what we have to find out is the correlation between certain objects as references and the terms he uses to refer to them, in a way that "we can reconcile all this with our neighbor's verbal behavior." When the thesis of indeterminacy of radical translation is used as a basis, it is no longer surprising that different correlations fulfill the condition. For nothing other than a radical translation of the neighbor's utterances is required here. That he and I use the same language does not make any theoretical difference for the execution of the task; only in practice does it make alternative reconstructions more arbitrary. The case Quine is dealing with here is in fact not the one of someone else's utterances in my own language, but of utterances in a remote language very similar to mine. This similarity, though guiding the choice of translation hypothesis in practice, theoretically does not favor any one of them.

Quine also introduces an argument for the situation of radical translation in the case of others using the same language; that is, that the language is, after all, different. "On deeper reflection, radical translation begins at home. Must we equate our neighbor's English words with the same string of phonemes in our own mouths? Certainly not; for sometimes we do not thus equate them." (OR, p. 46).

The last statement is certainly true, but it is not a sufficient argument for the first. In case of confusion or a slip of the tongue we do translate someone else's utterances in our language into different ones in our idiolect. But that does not mean that we are bound to reconstruct every one of his sentences by observing his verbal behavior, thus always being in a situation of radical translation. Understanding in the same language should not be taken as a

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12. OR, p. 47.

fortunate case of radical translation. It would be more plausible to suppose that our fellow speaker's utterances belong to the same language as our own, not only to a one very similar, and to consider the reconstruction of reference on behavioral evidence as an unfortunate exception, resulting from more or less serious differences in the command of the language (from the case of language learning to a mere slip of the tongue). But whether Quine's reason for the assumption is valid or not, the important point is that his argument does assume the situation of radical translation in the case of someone else's utterances in our language. Failing this premise, the argument set forth in section V, that it does not make sense to state what a given term refers to, does not prove step 5. The argument only proves that in principle there is no determinate solution to the problem of relating terms of an alien language to objects referred to by these terms. And so far as statements of the reference of a term are statements of a fact that would be given when and only when a clear solution to this problem is provided, to this extent meaningful statements of the reference of a term are, indeed, impossible.

## IX

This very presupposition, according to which reference, if it can be verified at all, has to be verified as a correlation of the kind mentioned, is rejected by Quine himself when he discusses step 6 of the argument. Here he is no longer dealing with an external correlation of word and object based on verbal behavior: Here we already find ourselves inside the language in question, using its conceptual means and really referring distinctively to objects without having to wait for any external correlation of words and objects. For this reason alone we need not pay much attention to Quine's argument for the point of departure from radical translation even in the case of utterances in one's own language. Step 6 does not in fact suppose such a situation of radical translation in this case. "Picturing us at home in our language, with all its predicates and auxiliary devices" (OR, p. 48) really posits precisely a situation that does not require radical translation. And only for such a "home language" is the following true: "In these terms we can say in so many words that this is a formula and that a number, this a rabbit and that a rabbit part, this and that the same rabbit, and this and that different parts. *In just those words*" (OR, p. 48).

Determinate reference, which, taken as an objective relation between signs of a remote language and objects in the world, proved incomprehensible, has now become something familiar and no longer problematic, something we have always been able to accomplish in our own language and, availing ourselves of its means, even provably so.

## X

One could object that this does not sufficiently answer the question posed.

Of course, we believe that we refer distinctively to objects by using our own language. But one would like to know how to give a verifiable content to this belief. The question how to fix determinately the references of the terms of a language could not be solved by appeal to current performance of determinate reference in our language.

The answer is that this simply cannot be determinately settled, as the argument from indeterminacy (steps 1-5) shows. There are two ways, then, to deal with the situation: 1) Following this objection one could persist in requiring that the reference of the expressions of a language be determinable as an objective relationship by empirical observation. That would mean to reduce the notion of reference to meaninglessness. 2) Since this seems to be an absurd situation, one desists from this requirement and corrects the notion of reference; it is not an empirically verifiable relation between signs and things, but something accomplished each time we speak. This is the solution Quine chooses in OR: "This network of terms and predicates and auxiliary devices is, in relativity jargon, our frame of reference, or coordinate system. Relative to it we can and do talk meaningfully and distinctively of rabbits and parts, numbers and formulas" (OR, p. 48).

This assurance, that we can and do talk meaningfully and distinctively of rabbits and their parts, by no means answers the question as to how one could determine from observation of behavior whether a term refers to rabbits or their parts. The statement is intelligible only as the rejection of such a question. "We can and do" certainly contributes little to the search for an objective verification of determinate reference. It does, however, counter it by the point that reference has to be conceived precisely as something we can and do accomplish in speaking.

Quine's statement that reference is relative to the coordinate system of a language is based on analogy to location in space and should be understood accordingly. Reference to objects is not relative to a specific language as to a third party. Rather, we relate ourselves to objects by speaking a particular language. Neither are determinations of location externally relative to a coordinate system; rather, we determine locations *in using* a coordinate system. Relativity enters the picture only for the reason that reference as well as determination of location can be carried out at will in many different systems, whereby systems do, however, allow for interchangeable reconstruction.<sup>13</sup> But every reconstruction already takes place for its part within its own system, whatever that might be.

The fact, therefore, that totally different languages can take over the role of one's own system, that there is no final and supreme language, but only

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13. Quine does not claim that every system is reconstructable in every other. He explicitly mentioned the possibility of languages having, for example, no idiom corresponding exactly to our "there is . . ." (LPV, p. 107). But certainly it is true that any system is reconstruable in some other.

an indefinite series of “ultimate” languages, shows its harmlessness by analogy with the case of coordinate systems. We need no ultimate coordinate system in order to give exact locations, and we need no “true” (“eigentliche”) language in order to refer distinctively to things. Conversely, reference and location are understandable only if we incorporate into their concept their relation to the system in question, that is, their relativity.

## XI

Thus, Quine's formulation of the relativistic thesis becomes clear. “What makes sense is to say not what the objects of a theory are” (it makes no sense to state the reference of the terms of a theory by correlating certain objects with them), “absolutely speaking”—that is, as an objectively verifiable matter of fact that can be determined independently of our own reference to objects—“but how one theory of objects is interpretable or reinterpretable in another” (OR, p. 50). The reference of its terms can be determined only within the framework, and with the devices, of a language in which we ourselves refer to objects. Here interpretation does not mean to substitute the terms of one theory for those of the other, nor to correlate sets of objects. It is just the point of the thesis that to interpret terms in the sense of correlating sets of objects already presupposes “interpretation” in the sense of a reconstruction of the referential performance of a term by means of our own language. That, after all, is the original meaning of “interpreting”: translating. And that, in the present context, means designating the matter at hand with the means of the home language. Statements about reference follow the pattern: “*Kaninchen*” denotes rabbits. The suspicion of the triviality of the relativistic thesis is thereby made understandable—but also refutable. If reference were verifiable as a correlation between terms and objects, we would refer ourselves in a corresponding statement to terms and objects. But in this case, it would be trivial to point out that it is always we ourselves who express reference by means of our language system. This pointing out loses its triviality if reference cannot be so verified, that is, through the thesis of indeterminacy. This does not serve as an argument for the doctrine of relativity, as can be seen from the reconstruction in section V of this chapter. Indeterminacy only shows that a situation prevails, in which the otherwise trivial indication of reference in our speech becomes decisive. Reference as an objective relationship between terms and objects cannot be verified and thus becomes an empty notion; if reference is to mean anything, that can only be determined with respect to the object relation we have already established in our language and its conceptual apparatus. In the situation presented by the thesis of indeterminacy, this referring becomes the guarantee and prototype of possible reference.<sup>14</sup>

14. Field's suspicion that the thesis of relativity might exclude a correspondence theory of truth, is therefore unjustified. Any correspondence theory would

Considered in this way, the thesis of relativity corrects Quine's own approach. The considerations connected with radical translation serve a naturalistic theory of meaning. But it becomes apparent that the concept of reference, essential to a theory of meaning, cannot be accounted for on naturalistic terms, but really becomes meaningless. The empirical material of verbal behavior is not sufficient for the verification of determinate reference.

If the notion of reference is to make sense, it has to be taken not as an objective relationship between terms and objects but as an immanent performance of our use of language. For only within a language and on the basis of the referential apparatus it provides can we determine the references of terms. Thus Quine's partly ironical mention of "transcendental metaphysics"<sup>15</sup> is, after all, justified. A connection appears, not with regard to a scholastic doctrine of transcendentals, as he seems to think, but with regard to transcendental philosophy. For the result achieved corresponds to the basic conviction of transcendental philosophy that our reference to objects cannot be comprehended as a relationship between things, but only in terms of our own activity. What is meant here by "activity" or "performance" is certainly vague, and transcendental philosophy would have to clarify just this. Clearly it cannot be the ghostly activity of a being behind the real world, a so-called "transcendental subject." The activity is nothing more mysterious than our performance of speaking about determinate things by using words: "we can and do talk meaningfully and distinctively of . . ."

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need a concept of reference: a sentence is true if it corresponds to what it refers to. Quine tries to find out what it means that terms refer to something. If it is a result of this attempt that reference can only be understood as something we accomplish in speaking within the framework of a certain conceptual system, this does not work against a theory of correspondence. Quine does not deny, but rather takes recourse to, the fact that by the term "rabbit" we do refer to rabbits. Thus he rather argues for the possibility of a correspondence theory, instead of rejecting it.

15. "In their elusiveness, at any rate—in their emptiness now and again except relative to a broad background—both truth and ontology may in a suddenly rather clear and even tolerant sense be said to belong to transcendental metaphysics" (OR, p. 68).

HANS BLUMENBERG, *DIE GENESIS DER  
KOPERNIKANISCHEN WELT*

Frankfurt AM Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1975. 803 pp.

Martin G. Kalin

This is a book unlike any on the same topic in English. Though its author would concur with, say, Kuhn that "the Copernican Revolution was a revolution in ideas, a transformation of man's conception of the universe and of his own relation to it,"<sup>1</sup> he breaks sharply with Kuhn and others in his approach to the subject. Blumenberg's work is at once more and less detailed than the best in English: more with respect to the broad cultural background against which Copernican ideas revolt, but less with respect to those particular tenets in astronomy that have come to abbreviate this revolt.

Blumenberg takes a hard look at the impact of Copernican ideas not only on such obvious beneficiaries as Galileo and Kepler, but also on Lambert and Kant. He devotes chapters to Osiander, Rhetikus, and Bruno—yet does not explore Copernicus' own writings *Satz um Satz*. Little is said in the book about Copernicus' mixed feelings about his Ptolemaic mentors: on the one hand, his loyalty to their ideals of perfectly circular, uniform motion; on the other, his distress over the tortured mathematics in which they try to articulate painstaking observations of the heavens. The approach makes sense, however, since Blumenberg intends to write about the genesis of the Copernican world rather than about the thinker from whom this world takes its name. To appreciate just why his work says little about details in astronomy, as the discipline that Copernicus inherits from the Ptolemaic tradition, we must get clear on its aim. This is not to decide whether Copernican astronomy flows, by some 'inner logic,' from previous work in the

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1. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Copernican Revolution: Planetary Astronomy in the Development of Western Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 1.

field – though Blumenberg's jargon often suggests as much. Even less is its aim to pinpoint those 'external influences,' in the form of prior hypotheses in astronomy that came to bear upon Copernicus on one or another matter. Blumenberg cares about neither the "necessity" nor the "actuality" of Copernican astronomy, but instead about its mere "possibility" (pp. 149-161). He sets out to answer why Copernicus was not simply another Aristarchus. Though both suggested heliocentrism as an hypothesis, and for this shared the charge of impiety, only Copernicus had profound impact. Blumenberg wants to spell out what, in the history of ideas between the two, made such impact possible. He thus presents this history as more than an obstacle for Copernicanism to overcome, as more than ancient superstition that impedes modern science. The tradition against which Copernicus labors also furnishes him the *Spielraum* in which to toy with notions that, before long, start to destroy their original setting. In brief, Copernican ideas rebel against the very tradition that begets them. The begetting interests Blumenberg as much as the rebelling.

Yet the book's aim tends to get lost amid its details. At times, for instance, Blumenberg presents Newton as a necessary consequence of Copernicus. This sort of talk is not meant to impute necessity to ideas, as if the insights of Copernicus were able somehow to insure those of Newton. The point is rather that Copernicus would not count as a revolutionary in ideas if Newton had not shared in the revolt. Copernicus, after all, is but one figure in an upheaval, even though his name now stands for the brave new world that many other minds helped to make. Blumenberg thus sees the Copernican revolution as precisely that struggle having Newtonian mechanics as one of its decisive victories. (pp. 586-606) Without the aid of Laplace, Descartes, Galileo, Kepler, Newton, and others to whom Blumenberg devotes extended analysis, Copernicus would have been only a latter-day Aristarchus.

The book opens on a dramatic note, and holds it well. Blumenberg starts out with Poincaré's question about whether there might have been a Copernicus even if we humans had been unable to gaze at the stars, perhaps because of a thick mist overhead or eyes too weak to see through our present atmosphere. Poincaré believes that Copernicus still would have come, only later and as a 'pure physicist.' (pp. 11-15) This view harks back to the one of Henry More and the English Platonists, who saw the revolution as the victory of reason over the senses, of the idea over the appearances. Feuerbach shares the view as well, and articulates it with typical condescension: so long as the ancients did not think but merely saw, just so long were the heavens filled with divinely animate things; only with philosophy did reason begin to free us from religion, and allow us to transform mythic 'pictures' into secular 'facts' (pp. 99-100).

Blumenberg rebukes this reading of history. For him it makes no sense to talk about the modern revolution in physics apart from the one in

astronomy, or even to insinuate that two upheavals took place instead of one. Such talk suggests that the disciplines enjoy distinct origins and identities; in fact, of course, they share a history. Blumenberg therefore looks at Galilean-Newtonian mechanics as part of a larger revolution that bears the name of someone who toiled in the *then* separate field of astronomy. Part of Copernicus' accomplishment was to begin erasing the boundary between astronomy and physics.

All this is not to say that Blumenberg ignores the Platonic theme of reason versus the senses. He gives detailed analysis of Copernicus's dedicatory preface to Paul III, in which the astronomer argues that the earth has been created not for the "security of life," but rather for the "achievement of reason" (p. 240). Copernicus does not discredit anthropocentrism, but merely reinterprets (and thereby strengthens) it. The astronomer contends, in effect, that the presence of our reason on earth gives this planet a status that it could not endow on us simply by its being the physical center of the cosmos. Our reason triumphs over the mysteries of the cosmos, and thereby lends status to the one planet that is home to it. Blumenberg characterizes this as the "humanistic idealization of the world-center" (p. 237).

Let me pause here to state what by now may be obvious: Blumenberg's study resists summary, for it covers such a multitude of topics. Rather than taking a hurried glance at many of these, let me instead inspect two or three with the aim of highlighting the book's strengths and weaknesses. As befits a study of the Copernican world, the book takes risks. It offers provocative and largely persuasive readings of texts, which it carefully places within historical context. Even the reader who remains unpersuaded on this or that detail should come away with a far richer grasp of how many ideas went into shaping the Copernican world.

Though not a chief project, one of the book's accomplishments is to clarify where Aristotle stands in cosmology with respect to Copernicus. A common misunderstanding, which Blumenberg tries to correct, attributes to Aristotle an anthropocentric bias that Copernicus later must overcome:

The coinciding of the center of the universe with the center of the earth in Aristotelian cosmology is a fact of physical, not metaphysical, significance. It is of no value in indicating mankind's estimation of itself and placement of itself in nature. In opposition to the Pythagoreans, Aristotle declares the pre-eminence of the enclosing over the enclosed, hence of the spheres over their center. That the center of the universe is no distinctive spot follows from the Aristotelian doctrine of the elements, which links the center of the universe with the element Earth, and thereby with the lowest status in value. The earth is not of the material of stars, and therefore cannot be a star among stars, as the Pythagoreans maintained and Copernicus will establish (p. 215).

Blumenberg further explains that Aristotle recognizes no uniform purposefulness throughout the cosmos, and so cannot take mankind as its single metaphysical center or *telos*. The sharp distinction between translunar and

sublunar regions, together with the doctrine of elements, means that we humans enjoy but restricted status within the cosmos as a whole. We are the highest reality in the lowest region, for reality gets better as it moves away from us on earth. So the preeminent reality in the cosmos is not mankind, but rather the prime mover that, from beyond the outermost sphere, inspires endless imitation within the spheres of its perfection; and the best imitations come from the translunar region. In sum, the “geocentric religiosity” (p. 209) for which Aristotle and his disciples too often get blamed in fact stems from the Stoics, whose program of *contemplatio caeli* also gets misconstrued as Aristotelian in both character and origin. This last point needs clarifying.

For the Stoics, the heavens owe their status as the object of pure theory precisely to their distance from us on earth. The stars are there not so much for our convenience in, say, navigation, as for our inspiration. The earth is thus privileged because it furnishes the best view of the heavens, which in turn are the proper object for a theory grounded in religious awe. (p. 29ff.)

Aristotle sees things quite differently. For him the heavens are epistemically as well as physically distant, and hence not a proper object of study for the *physikos*. Aquinas echoes the master’s voice in saying that the expanse between earth and heavens marks an essential difference between the two, which our intellects cannot overcome (p. 216). So while the earth fails to be metaphysically preeminent despite its spot at the center of the universe, it remains empirically so for us. Only within the sublunar region can our survey of particulars (*epagoge*) culminate in insight (*nous*) into the very form or constitutive nature (*eidos*) of things, and thereby achieve knowledge in the strict sense. Aristotle thus denies on epistemic grounds any physics other than a terrestrial one. Further, his optimism about our gaining insight into the nature of earthly things makes clear why a terrestrial physics will not be mathematical: it will deal primarily with formal-teleological causes, which resist mathematical formulation, and only secondarily with mechanical or productive ones, which invite this sort of formulation.

Ptolemaic astronomers line up behind Aristotle on this matter. For them, as for him, no celestial physics—no genuine science of the heavens—is possible. They too concede our lack of insight into the “Intelligence and Will,” the form, that inheres in a heavenly body and accounts for how it moves. This lack of insight means that we cannot cite the mechanical causes of motion that, for any Aristotelian, derive from formal-teleological ones. In short, the heavens remain a mystery. The translunar region accordingly becomes the arena for hypothesis, for ‘description’ rather than ‘explanation.’ Since our insight cannot ground a science of the heavens, we must make do with a mix of descriptive correctness and mathematical elegance (namely, simplicity). What favors one Ptolemaic picture of the heavens over another is its aesthetics as much as its accuracy. Recall, for example, that notions such as the eccentric and the equant crept into

Ptolemaic astronomy as simplifying moves meant to shore up elegance as much as accuracy. Recall too the notorious problem of agreeing on how the orbits of Mars and Venus should be drawn.

In surveying the Aristotelian tradition, Blumenberg points out which of its tenets and presuppositions became obstacles for the Copernican rebels to hurdle. Two of the main ones were these: first, the sharp demarcation of reality into sublunar and translunar regions, and the attendant denial of a celestial physics; second, the primacy of formal-teleological over mechanistic (and so mathematical) explanation within physics. The two are related, of course. Blumenberg considers each at length, and notes that these hurdles were not taken in one quick stride. Kepler, for example, slipped a few steps backward with his great leaps forward. He retreated, at least in the early writings, to the ancients' dynamics in which planets move in paths that their own "Intelligence and Will" dictates, though he also leads the moderns into the new mathematics of orbits. Even this move forward carries a trace of the past, for Kepler argues that elliptical orbits—in sweeping out equal areas over equal times—meet the ancient ideal of perfectly uniform motion. Indeed, he suggests that circular orbits are but one sort of elliptical orbit! Kepler, unlike Newton, simply was not ready to fashion a physics at once celestial and terrestrial, much less one that completely jettisoned the Aristotelian view that function (even in the heavens) must follow form. He thus illustrates how tough were the Aristotelian obstacles that the Copernicans had finally to overcome, and at last overcame with Newtonian mechanics. In sum, Aristotle resisted the Copernicans not with a "geocentric religiosity" (of which they might be accused more justly than he), but rather with his commitment in physics to formal-teleological explanation and with his conviction about the vast epistemic gap between us earthlings and the heavens (pp. 227-236).

Blumenberg tries to dig still deeper into those genuinely Aristotelian suppositions that the Copernicans had to root out in the course of planting the seeds for a new science—one that would make both the heavens and the earth a proper object for a mathematical physics. Blumenberg here builds a large point out of two smaller ones. The first is that few opposed Copernicanism on the strength of one or another passage from an ancient text, including the Bible. Luther is the notorious exception. He rebuked Copernicus as a fool for denying what the Joshua text seems to make plain: that the sun, not the earth, does the moving. Luther backed up his case with a peculiar skepticism, insisting that "no reason can either comprehend or understand the natural works of God's creation" (p. 376). Copernicus, like Aristarchus before him, stands guilty of blasphemy that stems from pride in human reason. Yet almost nobody of stature besides Luther took the Joshua text literally, not even the most severe critics of Copernicanism. The reason lies in the critics' commitment to Aristotle, specifically to the dictum that God touches the natural order through elaborate causal links. For the sun to

stand still, these links would have to break — and God would lose his grip on nature!

Harder to counter than selected texts was the heightening reverence, during the Renaissance, for all things ancient and especially Greek. Some of the strongest opposition to Copernicus was thus secular rather than religious in character. Just as the Greeks had seen nature as inalterable, so their new fans of the Renaissance saw the truth (presumably entrusted to the Greeks) as equally inalterable. Blumenberg presses the matter:

Copernicus himself knew that suspicion against the craze of modernization would encumber his work more strongly than would its difference in content with traditional cosmology and the latter's geocentrism, also more strongly than the difficulties with specific Biblical texts. The appeal to the inalterability of nature was one of the strongest pieces of argumentation from the Renaissance. On this presupposition rested even the literary reach back to texts of antiquity. The presupposition guaranteed the possibility of not only reading and understanding the newly discovered writings of the ancients, but also of insuring their current worth as if they had been written in the present (p. 314).

The second small point of which Blumenberg makes a larger one is this: for Aristotelians, including the medieval scholastics, time and causality were paired concepts. Both notions are clearly basic to any cosmology, though neither may be conspicuous within a particular version. If the Copernicans were to topple the Ptolemaic constructs of the universe, then they had to chip away at two supporting notions that came straight from Aristotle. Blumenberg treats the issue in great detail, and goes well beyond the usual discussions of *actio per distans*, the demise of teleological explanation in physics, and the like. For instance, he suggests a distinction between accompanying (*begleitende*) and transferred or transmitted (*übertragene*) causality to sum up the differences between the efficient causes of orthodox Aristotelianism on the one hand, and the impetus of Aristotelian scholasticism and the inertia of Galilean mechanics on the other. The distinction is familiar, of course. Blumenberg, however, uses it to make the neglected point that the concept of transferred causality, so integral to the Copernican revolution, became a stumbling block for many — and not simply on philosophical grounds, but rather on a mix of these and religious ones. The medieval scholastics had articulated the notion of grace and the attendant one of sacrament precisely in terms of accompanying causality: the sacraments are those 'contact causes' through which God effects spiritual change in humans. To tamper with Aristotle's account of causality seemed tantamount to assailing key religious dogmas. This mix of religion and philosophy forms the cultural background from which the Copernicans tried to break free. It helps to explain both the hard opposition to the notion of inertia and the ambiguity in the scholastics' own notion of impetus. (pp. 172–200)

Blumenberg thoroughly pursues the ways in which Aristotle's account of

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causality permeated Christianity, thus becoming a formidable barrier in the path of the Copernicans. He follows the topic of causality in yet another direction, which strikes him as novel:

The claim that Copernicus was decisive in altering the concept of space within the modern age qualifies already as an almost indisputable matter within history of science. The absolute, infinite space of Newton appears as a consequence of the widening of cosmic space, which had to be undertaken in line with Copernican presuppositions. Just as clear is the critical reconstruction of this consequence along the detour, since Leibniz, around the idealization of space. Now my thesis is that the sharpening of the problematic of time, which likewise characterizes the modern age, cannot be grasped without this alteration that Copernicus had undertaken in his model of the universe. The problematic of time certainly is less spectacular, and makes less emotional impact, than that of space. This may explain why the Copernican consequence with respect to the concept of time has not been presented until now (p. 505).

In laying out the problematic of time, Blumenberg is at his most speculative and provocative. He turns first to Aristotle, detailing how the prime mover grounds time. This utterly transcendent and impersonal 'deity' acts as the *telos* of all other motion (its self-reflection being taken as a peculiar sort of motion), and thereby as the *proton kinoun* of all other motion. Of special interest here is the eternal, uniform motion of the heavens, since this is the very sort of which time ultimately is "the measure of motion according to before and after." Yet if motion of the heavens is illusory, as the Copernicans aver, then what becomes of time? For one thing, it no longer can be grounded outside the earth and within the highest reaches of the cosmos; for another, it breaks away from teleological causality. (Blumenberg here overlooks a point that supports his thesis: although Kant, like Aristotle, grounds time in causality, the former does so exactly in the mechanistic or efficient kind alone.) Once the ontological ground for time drops out of the heavens and falls back to earth, time fast becomes the secular notion that is now so at home in our science. With great skill, Blumenberg traces this secularization from Aristotle to Newton, who accounts for time without recourse to either eternal, uniform motion or teleological causality. (pp. 501-606)

Here may be the place to take up two related shortcomings in Blumenberg's otherwise fine study of time. The first is that he overlooks, or at least underplays, some important figures. Descartes may be the most conspicuously absent from the discussion. He talks to all the issues on which Blumenberg puts such emphasis: ascent of mechanistic over teleological explanation; erasure of the distinction between translunar and sublunar regions; priority of reason over the senses; mathematization of physics; science and utility; and secularization of nature. The second shortcoming is more serious. Although Blumenberg carefully notes the link between time and causality, and spells out in ample detail how a bias for mechanistic over

teleological explanation calls for a new notion of time, he does not trace these matters back to a key epistemological and anthropological one. For the ancients in general, and Aristotle in particular, insight into the constitutive nature of a thing (*eidos*) is at once insight into its proper goal or *telos*. So teleological rests upon 'essential' explanation. The insight in question must be characterized as rational or intellectual, rather than merely sensory; it is what Kant could have called "noumenal" intuition, and what the ancients themselves named *nous*. Modern qualms about making teleological the paradigm of scientific explanation reflect modern doubts about our access to the constitutive natures, and so the proper goals, of things. So if the Copernican notion of time rests on a new understanding of causality, which in turn accounts for a revised ideal of explanation in science, then all of this derives from modern despair over achieving noumenal intuitions of the sort that Aristotle claimed possible. (Even Descartes, insistent upon grounding science in *intuitus*, denied that our insight penetrates to the proper goals of things.) In different terms, the modern attitude toward reason is mixed. The moderns indeed reject ancient pessimism about reason's access to the translunar region; at the same time, however, the moderns introduce pessimism as to how deeply reason can penetrate the phenomena, old and new, to which it has access. In short, the moderns claim that reason knows less about more.

A few words about how Blumenberg handles Kant's famous reference to Copernicus also seem in order here. Bold speculation has advantages but also drawbacks: while carving out for study new and even unsuspected territory, it may butcher prosaic details that stand in the way of such adventuresome exploration. Blumenberg's reading of Kant's Copernican revolution illustrates the danger. Blumenberg rightly points out that Kant does not intend to mimic Copernicus in any obvious way. Kant's proposal that the known conforms to the knower<sup>2</sup> is not an exact but rather an inverted analogy with respect to Copernicus' earlier proposal that the spectator moves around the sun. Kant's knower does not match up with Copernicus' spectator, which is the only way the reference could be read as straightforward analogy. So the business about conformity of known to knower merely abbreviates Kant's revolution, just as the doctrine of heliocentrism only summarizes Copernicus' prototype.<sup>3</sup>

Blumenberg further acknowledges that Kant imitates Copernicus more in 'method' than in 'doctrine', yet overplays (and thereby misconstrues) this similarity. The gist of Blumenberg's analysis is this: just as the Copernican revolution moves from an empirical hypothesis about earth and sun to transemperical (properly Newtonian) concepts such as force, so the Kantian

2. *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N. Kemp-Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1968, Bxxii).

3. See Martin G. Kalin, "A New Look at Copernicus and Kant" *Man and World* 7 (August, 1974), pp. 271-78.

imitation goes from the theoretical (cognitive) to the practical (moral)—from the realm of experience and its transcendental conditions to that of freedom as autonomy (pp. 695–707). Copernicus opens the way to a physics steeped in transemperial concepts, a physics that in the end vindicates his own empirical hypothesis; and Kant's critique of theoretical reason (*Verstand* and dialectical *Vernunft*), his restricting its scope to the realm of sensory experience, also clears the way for practical or transemperial reason. Accordingly, the 'proof' of Kant's Copernican hypothesis comes not in the first but in the second *Kritik*, just as the 'proof' for the Copernican original comes not in his own works but rather in Newton's *Principia* (pp. 698–700).

This summary of Blumenberg's position omits much of interest, but indicates where its suggestive and often enlightening reading of Kant strays too far from the text. Kant names Copernicus in the same breath (CPR, Bxiv) as he does Torricelli and Stahl. All get praise for their 'nonempiricist' approach to science, for going to "nature in order to be taught by her, but not as a pupil who allows himself to recite everything the teacher wishes, rather as an appointed judge who compels witnesses to answer questions that he presents them" (CPR, Bxiii, original translation). So the strength of the new science lies less in the content of its hypotheses than in the method of coming up with these; and the method consists in fashioning exploratory theses that interrogate nature, whose answers either confirm or do not confirm them. Kant intends to imitate this method. He therefore adopts a change in *Denkart*, though this involves metaphysics rather than science. Just as the new Copernican *Denkart* came to be summarized in the hypothesis of heliocentrism, and not in the method that led to it, so Kant abbreviates his 'first thought' in a slogan about the known's conforming to the knower. The slogan summarizes transcendental idealism, which is precisely Kant's new approach to metaphysics.

Blumenberg has little quarrel with this so far. Yet he thinks that Kant's imitation of Copernicus must be understood with reference to the first *Kritik*'s culminating in the second. Kant's own remarks indicate otherwise:

The change in point of view, analogous to this Copernican hypothesis, which is expounded in the [first] *Kritik*, I put forward in this preface as an hypothesis only, in order to draw attention to the character of these first attempts at such a change, which are always hypothetical. But in the [first] *Kritik* itself it will be proved, apodictically not hypothetically . . . (CPR, xxiii).

Demonstration, especially an apodictic one, clearly falls within the province of the first *Kritik*. The promised demonstration comes in the Dialectic, specifically in the Antinomy where Kant offers an indirect proof for the slogan that abbreviates transcendental idealism: while transcendental realism, its sole rival, flounders in paradox, his own 'hypothesis' in metaphysics avoids the reportedly insoluble contradictions. In sum, Kant's

Copernican revolution begins and ends *within* the first *Kritik* insofar as there he both introduces and seeks to vindicate a new *Denkart* modeled on the Copernican one, where "Copernican" is taken in the broad sense of Blumenberg's book. The second *Kritik* then simply builds upon what Kant takes to be the success of his Copernican project.

Let me close this review by indicating some other topics on which Blumenberg focuses a keen eye. He looks closely at Copernican arguments for the earth's being a sphere, and links this issue to that of heliocentrism. Some of his best historical work has to do with this topic. The last section of the book takes up Copernican optics, which covers such topics as these: the modern view of reason as the anticipation rather than completion of perception; modern skepticism about the coordination between cosmos and sense organ; the problem of 'artificial' (namely, technologically aided) perception; the problem of deception.

Blumenberg ends the book with some refreshingly sober remarks on the era of astronauts. Amid the happy and often silly talk about the conquest of space and the search for intelligence above or at least beyond our own, he echoes both Freud on the character of reason and the ancients on its place within the cosmos. Perhaps, cautions Blumenberg, reason is not "the crown of nature's achievements, not even her consistent continuation, but rather the risky removal of a defect in adaptation, an ersatz adaptation . . . a break in evolution" (p. 791). Reason, in short, may turn out to be more a curse than a blessing. Our ventures into space have shown nothing quite so clearly as the limits of our own rationality, for we come back to earth mumbling platitudes about the incomprehensible. Blumenberg pokes fun at our new found reverence for 'direct' sensory experience. In referring to the moon-landing, he notes: "Does it mean something that someone has seen all this 'with his own eyes'? Was mankind's horizon of reality widened?" (p. 785)

Finally, Blumenberg repeats the ancients' caution on the distinct gap between the earth, which is home to our reason, and the vast reaches beyond. For him the Copernican revolution takes us full circle, though we should gain in wisdom as well as knowledge along the ride:

It is more than a triviality that the experience of coming back to earth could not have been had otherwise than by leaving it. The cosmic oasis, in which mankind lives, this exceptional wonder, the blue true-planet in the midst of the disillusioning wasteland of the heavens is no more 'also a star,' but rather the only one that seems to merit this name.

Only as the experience of turning back will it be accepted that, for mankind, there is no alternative to the earth, just as there is no alternative to reason than mankind's (p. 794).

ERNST TUGENDHAT, *VORLESUNGEN ZUR  
EINFÜHRUNG IN DIE SPRACHANALYTISCHE  
PHILOSOPHIE*

Frankfurt Am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976. 535 pp.

Konstantin Kolenda

A reader of Professor Tugendhat's book should not be misled by the modesty of its title. Indeed, it is this reviewer's opinion that the book is a major contribution to fundamental issues of philosophy. Its original intent may have been to introduce students to *sprachanalytische Philosophie*, and that purpose is certainly fulfilled. But it soon becomes apparent that Tugendhat's objective is both wider and deeper. Even if the lectures on which the book is based are intended to be in part introductory; by the time their argument ends, the reader finds himself in the thick of a most sophisticated discussion with avant-garde practitioners of philosophical analysis. If the reader is patient and robust enough to persist in following the author's line of thought, he will become a seasoned veteran by the time he digests the book's contents.

An examination of those contents shows that the author brings to his task unique qualifications. He has a combination of competences rarely encountered on the contemporary philosophical scene: 1) a thorough knowledge of the classical, ancient and modern philosophical tradition, 2) first-hand acquaintance with contemporary German thought—Husserl, Frege, Heidegger,—and 3) an equally impressive mastery of the mode of philosophizing broadly known as language analysis. Tugendhat's achievement is that he is able to relate strands of ideas coming from all three sources and to apply them constructively to some perennial problems. The result is, I believe, original and impressive. Although the author's procedure is businesslike and unpretentiously low-keyed throughout, he manages to throw new light on some of the deepest, hitherto unresolved questions.

The proximate objective of the book is to clarify the role of the singular

term in a predicative sentence. This seemingly small task turns out to harbor profound issues. It becomes clear that our entire philosophical tradition has handled this subject in a surprisingly unsophisticated way. The traditional approach, already at work in Aristotle's thought and perpetuated up to our times, has tended to concentrate on the simple relationship of "standing for" or "representing"; the singular term is said to *stand for* or *represent* an object. Tugendhat's label for this approach is *gegenstandstheoretisch*. There is no simple way to translate this label into English, and its intent emerges more fully when one contrasts it with the approach Tugendhat attributes to Ludwig Wittgenstein. The central clue comes from Wittgenstein's claim that to understand the meaning of a linguistic expression one must understand the explanation of that meaning. To understand what the singular term of a predicative sentence means, one must explain its role in the sentence, and that role is far more complex than the relation of standing for or representing. The author's task in the book is to give an analysis of that complex role. He shows that it cannot be undertaken directly but must be preceded by considering the role of the predicate and of the whole sentence.

Tugendhat's own positive conclusions emerge only toward the end of the book. On the way to these conclusions he examines some crucial moves made by key philosophers in our tradition. Since he calls the approach he is criticizing "object-theoretical" (*gegenstandstheoretisch*), I shall abbreviate it as O-T. The approach he puts forward as an alternative I shall call L-A, standing for "language-analytic."

Tugendhat's argument is painstakingly detailed and consecutive; therein lies much of the book's effectiveness. The author moves in small, logical steps, each contributing its weight to the final conclusion. These virtues, however, present a special difficulty to a reviewer, namely, how to keep track of the details and yet manage not to lose sight of the main line of the argument. Given the author's far-ranging use of historical and contemporary material, it may be difficult to avoid the danger of misinterpretation or misunderstanding. Consequently, this review will limit itself to reporting some of the book's main findings, only briefly touching on matters that are covered on the way to the author's conclusions. For this reason, little would be gained from exact page references to the text. An English translation of the book is in preparation and will be published by Cambridge University Press, which will enable the interested reader to examine the author's argument in detail.

Tugendhat notes that tradition favors an ontological approach to the explication of the meaning of singular terms. That approach, however, tends to leave obscure or undetermined the difference between the sentence *subject* and the meaning of the entire singular predicative expression in which it occurs. What one must do is to shift from ontology to universal formal semantics. The meaning of singular terms cannot be explicated by itself but only in the context of analyzing the sentence in which it occurs; one must

determine what contribution it makes to the meaning of the sentence. The same question must be asked about the predicate. If the predicate of a predicative sentence tells us *what* the object of our thought, expressed in the singular term, is, then it may be plausible to conclude that the primary unit of meaning is not either of its terms taken by itself but the whole sentence. This being the case, the fundamental question of ontology, “What is being as being?,” must be replaced by the question, “What does it mean to understand a sentence?”

According to Tugendhat, there is an important shift in the nature of the approach to this topic in modern philosophy. The question about the objects is transformed into the question of their accessibility to consciousness. The key move was made by Descartes, who emphasized the certainty of the isolated thinker about the objects of his consciousness. The Cartesian shift is evident in all subsequent modern philosophy, including Kant and Husserl—the ontological question takes on an epistemological form. When Kant shifts to the language of intuitions (*Anschauungen*) and points out the importance of successive acts of consciousness as necessary conditions of experience, consciousness of objects becomes consciousness of rule-governed *acts*. All modern approaches, including those of British Empiricists, bring into prominence the notion of *representation* (*Vorstellung*). But, as Tugendhat points out, the notion of object is still presupposed but unanalyzed; consciousness is supposed to put before us something that represents an object.

Husserl’s line of thought is especially revealing in that regard. For him, the phenomenon of representing altogether loses its connection with sensory representation, and becomes a purely logical relation signifying reference to objects. That relation is said to be *like* the sensory awareness of a picture, with the crucial qualification that there is nothing sensory about it. Tugendhat concludes that this qualification makes Husserl’s notion nonsensical, an *Unding*.

Given these difficulties, one can see why Tugendhat credits Heidegger with pointing philosophy in a new direction. Indeed, his book is dedicated to Heidegger. It was Heidegger who, in *Being and Time*, moved away from the object approach by altogether dropping its modern fulcrum, namely, the notion of consciousness as the key to being. In place of consciousness Heidegger proposed a technical expression “*Entschlossenheit*” (“being open toward”) and used that term to point to the way man understands himself in the total context of meanings. Heidegger’s break with tradition appears salutary to Tugendhat, although he is not prepared to accept Heidegger’s line of thought from that point onward. He accepts the conclusion that the meaning of words is to be sought in the connected wholes within which they play a role, but suspects that Heidegger returned to the unanalyzed notion of object when he declared that all Being is the Being of beings, and went back, in his later philosophy, to the idea of entity as a thing.

Tugendhat grants that there is something right about Husserl’s notion of

intentionality: all experience is experience *of* something. But Husserl chose a rather restricted model to explicate the meaning of that notion. He modeled the states of consciousness or self-awareness on the awareness of external objects. As Wittgenstein was to point out in *Philosophical Investigations*, first-person psychological reports are not based on observation, even self-observation. I do not observe that I am worried when I use the expression "I am worried," rather, the fact that I am worried *comes to expression* in the utterance. Heidegger also rejected Husserl's view on this point and instead characterized such states of consciousness as forms of *Gestimmtsein*, of being, or finding oneself (attuned), in a certain way (*Befindlichkeit*). What is important about both Wittgenstein's and Heidegger's alternatives is that they are based on the realization that in such situations the notion of representation is out of place. In using expressions appropriate to such situations I do not *represent* a state of affairs but only *mean* it. The understanding of these states of affairs is grounded in understanding a sentence, and this is what Husserl's talk of intentionality boils down to. If Wittgenstein and Heidegger are right in their characterizations, there is no subject-object relation here and no intentionality modeled on that relation. Instead, there is sentence-understanding.

Having been brought to the conclusion that the primary unit of meaning is not any isolated part of the sentence but the sentence itself, I am well advised to undertake an analysis of the way various components of the sentence make their respective contributions to the meaning of the sentence. Although my specific objective is to understand the function of the singular term in predicative sentences, I have discovered that I cannot attack this objective directly, but must do so in a roundabout way. To say that a singular term stands for an object is to refer to a function that requires an explanation, and the question "What is meant by A?" belongs in the context of the whole sentence. Tugendhat takes up the task of explicating the predicative sentence by posing questions: 1) How is a singular term understood? 2) How is a predicate understood? 3) How is the composition of a singular term with the predicate understood? 4) How is a (predicative) sentence understood?

When this fourfold task is accomplished, it may turn out that in addition to finding a new, alternative account, one discovers what was wrong with the traditional (O-T) approach. At the same time the new account will serve as a criticism of the traditional approach. In that case there will be an adequate philosophical reason to replace that account by a new one, especially if the new (L-A) account, obtained on the basis of language analysis, is more comprehensive and illuminates in a fundamental way what the traditional philosophy kept covered up by not analyzing its talk of being as being or objects as objects. As Tugendhat notes, "Spongy thoughts have the advantage that one cannot break them up" (p. 358). Although I can talk, and am used to talking, in a certain way, especially in philosophy classrooms, that talk does not fit the facts and hence must be replaced by one that does. The pro-

blem underlying the idea that a concept stands for or represents an object cannot be resolved, and that is why the traditional theory cannot be disproved but stands in need of replacement.

On the way to replacing it, Tugendhat takes a lead from the later work of Wittgenstein, who concluded that to understand a sentence is to know how to use it, and also from the earlier work of Wittgenstein, Carnap, and others, who claimed that to understand an indicative sentence is to know under what conditions it is true or false. In analyzing the meaning of the predicate he finds it helpful to fall back on Wittgenstein's dictum, according to which "The meaning of a word is what is explained by the explanation of the meaning." (*PI*, Paragraph 560) He also introduces an interesting distinction between predicates and quasi-predicates, the latter serving as a technical notion and stipulating that the predicate term is tied to a particular perceptual situation. The distinction between predicates and quasi-predicates enables Tugendhat to show that it is precisely the completion of predicates by singular terms that makes the use of predicates, and thereby of whole predicative sentences, situation-independent. In addition, the roles of ostensive terms and of truth conditions are discussed in detail.

The basic conclusion is that the contributions of the singular term and of the predicate to the meaning of the sentence presuppose a prior understanding of the meaning of the indicative sentence. Such an understanding is reached in the explanation that to use an indicative sentence means to assert that its truth conditions are fulfilled. An assertion does not just put together two components—singular terms and predicate—as the O-T point of view has it. It is not the case that a state of affairs expressed in a sentence *Fa* is expressed by *adding to a* that for which the predicate *F* stands. Rather, the connecting element between them is the truth value of the assertion.

An assertion that *Fa* is true is true not when the predicate *F* is applied to the object for which *a* stands, but rather when the predicate is *justifiably* applicable to it. Thus the following definition of truth of predicative assertions can be given: the assertion that *a* is *F* is true when the predicate fits the object for which the singular term *a* stands, where "to fit" expresses the same as "to be true of." It was the mistake of the O-T approach that it conceived of this "fitting" or "standing for" as independent of the question of truth, indeed, the relevance of that question was obscured. Having raised it, I can now say the following: to say that a predicate fits an object *means* to say that the assertion that is made by means of a sentence is true and that that sentence is so formed that the predicate is completed by an expression that stands for an object, namely, the singular term.

It is now obvious why the L-A view proposed by Tugendhat regards singular terms as dependent expressions, and the indicative sentences in which they occur as primary semantical units. If singular terms are expressions that necessarily require completion by predicates, then an object is necessarily something classifiable, and the reference to objects must be

understood on the basis of the connection of assertions of truth. Furthermore, the asymmetry between predicates and singular terms is not conventional, but material. The question as to whether the predicate fits an object depends on whether it is known what the singular term *a* stands for, while the converse is not true: the question of what object the singular term stands for must be answered independently of this and is the condition for determining whether the predicate *F* fits it. The two functions are different, yet interdependent; the one function is needed *in order that* the other one may be performed. As Wittgenstein noted, to attach a name to something is *so far* to have said nothing at all at the level of meaningful speech. Tugendhat makes a similar point with regarding the meaning of singular terms.

It also belongs to the function of singular terms that their use is connected with the use of corresponding definite and indefinite pronouns. This connection is not peripheral. On the contrary, it shows that a singular term indicates which object, as distinguished from the multiplicity of all other objects, is being meant, that is, as that to which the predicate fits or of which it is true. This function Tugendhat dubs *specification*, a notion he sees related to but not identical with what Strawson called "to single out." I shall now describe that which occurs in a predicative assertion as follows: by means of a predicate is characterized that which is specified through the singular term. If specification determines which of all objects is being meant, then we can see that a singular term is not describable as just having the function of pointing to an object. That relation is properly understood only if one includes in it the presupposed reference to the manifold from which the object is picked out or singled out. Thus the understanding of the word "all" is *essentially* involved in the understanding of singular terms.

This feature of the use of singular terms helps explain why some logical problems arise in statements asserting the existence of single objects, "There is *x*." One cannot speak of a single object without speaking of all objects from which it is singled out. That is the reason why Russell's logical proper names, such as "this," cannot function as singular terms, because to specify means to indicate "which of all," and "this" does not differentiate something from everything else. According to Tugendhat, Russell's theory of logical proper names makes sense only within the presupposed theoretical-behavioristic context of quasi-predicates, and hence does not fit language as one knows it. Because Russell does not realize that to singular terms and singular sentences there belongs an appropriate generality, he also, mistakenly, denies the status of singular terms to descriptions and ordinary names.

Although the use of singular terms necessarily involves a reference to generality, it is nevertheless true that they refer to single objects *as single*. This alerts us to the need of distinguishing specification from identification. Because Strawson did not see the distinction clearly, his analysis begs the question. According to Strawson, the hearer identifies the object known by

the speaker when he knows that the object meant by the speaker is identical with such-and-such. The second member of this identity sentence is a singular term, and Strawson's analysis presupposes that the hearer understands that singular term. If so, the concept of identification thus understood cannot contribute to the explanation. The identification "the one that is such-and-such" is not sufficient. When I complete such an expression to a full sentence, I have "the one that is such-and-such is *F*," and so far I have not indicated of *which* object it is being said that it is *F*. I only have said that it is *F*, *whatever* it may be. It is not enough to say that there is only one such object, I must also specify it. According to Tugendhat, Russell's and Strawson's difficulties arise from their tacit assumption of the traditional view that an expression stands directly for an object.

The use of singular terms intrinsically involves the understanding of the identity sign. It belongs to the meaning of ostensive demonstrative expressions that they can be replaced by other ostensive expressions when the speech situation changes. It must be possible to refer to the *same* object by different ostensive expressions, such as "here," "there," "now," "then," or "later." This is connected with the fact that human beings are creatures whose perceptual situation changes; in order to refer to the same object from a different spatial or temporal perspective, a different sign must be used. It must also be possible to move from situations in which ostensive or demonstrative expressions are not used to those in which it is determined by perception whether the predicates asserted of the object fit or are true of that object. As noted before, this carry over from situation to situation by the systematic and rule-governed use of the identity sign is the decisive factor in the transition from quasi-predicates to predicates, that is, it constitutes a condition for the use of expressions as singular terms.

Tugendhat carries out a detailed analysis of the way the determination of spatio-temporal locations enters into the logical structure of singular terms. Here again his objective is to show in what ways the complex structure of signs must be articulated. His general conclusion here as elsewhere is that there is no sign-free reference to an object, to a single entity. The rule-governed use of signs, as described from the L-A perspective, does not take the place of *objects*, it only replaces the fictional sign-free *reference* to objects.

Summing up the results of the solution of the proximate task of the book, which serves as a touchstone for its general philosophical conclusion, I shall say the following. The function of a singular term, whether concrete or abstract, is to indicate which one of all is being meant, that is, which is being classified or characterized by the completing predicate. There is no such thing as reference to objects outside the sentence context. This means that language signs do not replace a function that might also be possible without them. That alleged function has turned out to be nonexistent, an *Unding*.

But if so, then I can no longer believe that an understanding of the con-

nection of thought and reality occurs when I innocently say, as the whole O-T tradition seemed simply to say, that there are beings, entities, or objects. Reference to entities is made possible via a complex use of signs embodied in a predicative sentence. We reach components of reality via true statements in which *classifying* predicates are given substantive *reference* by means of singular terms and in which the singling out function already presupposes the contrast between the object singled out and the manifold from which it is singled out, thus presupposing the notion of *negation*. In addition, the concept of *identity* is also a part of the background of understanding a predicative sentence, because the situation-independence of singular terms is secured by the *substitutability* of ostensive expressions connected with learning *correct* uses of particular singular terms. After all of this is said, it is difficult to see how anyone could find the notion of a singular term “standing for” an object directly or intuitively intelligible. The achievement of what I have called the L-A approach provides an entire formal intellectual (universal semantical) structure where it was innocently supposed none was needed.

It seems to me that in light of Tugendhat’s analysis our conception of the relation of beings, entities, or objects to Being must also change. Even those who *contrast* beings with Being still tend to think of the latter on the model of the former. When Heidegger repudiated this model and tried to articulate the meaning of Being in a new way, he found it necessary to make use of a highly idiosyncratic notion of truth as *aletheia*, an uncovering that simultaneously covers up what one tries to discover. His so-called trans-metaphysical move is highly metaphorical and culminates in ascribing philosophical primacy to inspired poetic utterances. Similarly, Derrida, a follower of Heidegger, deepens the mythologizing of Being by transforming Heidegger’s latest equivalent or name of Being, *Appropriation* (*Ereignis*), into another technical notion of *differance*, according to which all our concepts are merely traces (of Being?) which erase themselves.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast to such conceptions which move ontology farther and farther onto the high seas of theologically or skeptically tinged speculation, Tugendhat’s approach can be seen as a kind of demythologizing. Accepting Heidegger’s conclusion that our understanding of Being calls for a fresh analysis of the meaning of beings, he gives us an analysis that explains *how* thought connects with reality, or makes it intelligible, accessible. There is a

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1. See Martin Heidegger, *On Time and Being* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972): “What determines both, time and Being, in their own, that is in their belonging together, we shall call: *Ereignis*, the event of Appropriation” (p. 19). And Jacques Derrida, in his “Ousia and Gramme,” in *Phenomenology in Perspective*, F. J. Smith, ed. (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1970): “Beyond Being and beings, this difference, which would differentiate and defer (itself) incessantly, would also trace (itself); such a *differance* would be the first or last trace—if we could still speak here of origin or end (*fin*)” (p. 93).

distinctly Kantian ring to this analysis; we are shown the pure conceptual structure of predicative sentences, by means of which we discover what is true about the world. If, following Peirce, we define reality as that which is expressed in true propositions,<sup>2</sup> the laying bare of formal conditions, which make it possible to assert such propositions, is a considerable philosophical achievement. At least, it makes *Being* a much less mysterious notion—a definite gain for human understanding.

Tugendhat realizes that explaining the meaning of a predicative sentence, indispensable as it is, merely begins the task of explicating the multiple uses of language. He rounds out the work with remarks about the way this large task could be continued in light of the discoveries made in his book. He finds the steps taken by Austin and Searle to be somewhat problematic. Some of the questions involve the role of truth in expressions that are not indicative sentences.<sup>3</sup> Tugendhat's explorations here are only tentative, but he is of the opinion, rightly, I believe, that what he has done in the book will prove helpful in that larger enterprise.

To say that it will be helpful is an understatement. The book's careful step-by-step argument, carried on with clarity and acumen, penetrates areas that, surprisingly perhaps, have remained covered up through the centuries of prevailing philosophical tradition. Following Heidegger's and Wittgenstein's leads, Tugendhat throws new and promising light on many issues, which makes the reading of his book exciting. It is to be expected that a reader will not go along with all of the author's presuppositions or claims. One such point of possible disagreement may be the author's apparent endorsement of the view (p. 273) that knowledge is a kind of belief.<sup>4</sup> But apart from some marginal disagreements, it is difficult not to be impressed by the cogency and illuminating power of Tugendhat's analysis. It would be a mistake not to have this book on one's reading list.

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2. *Collected Papers*, vol. 1 p. 578, vol. 7, p. 345, vol. 8, p. 16.

3. See K. Kolenda. "Speech Acts and Truth," in *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, Vol. 4, No. 4, 1971.

4. In chapter 5, "On What One Knows," in his book *Res Cogitans* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1972), Zeno Vendler shows that "know and believe cannot have identical objects at all" (p. 99).



## KURT HÜBNER, KRITIK DER WISSENSCHAFTLICHEN VERNUNFT

Freiburg and Münich: Karl Alber, 1978. 442 pp.

Joseph J. Kockelmans

In the preface to this important book Hübner writes that today many believe that knowledge and truth in the strict sense are found only in the sciences. However, there are others who criticize the sciences severely, partly because of some obviously negative implications of the technology which they made possible. In Hübner's view neither of these conceptions proceeds from an adequate idea of what science truly is and what, in science, experience, knowledge, and truth genuinely mean. The book attempts to help clarify these issues. It focuses on those sciences which have the form of empirical theories, because only these sciences have led to the conceptions just mentioned. The author's view on these issues is explained systematically in eight chapters that do not presuppose a specialized knowledge of the empirical sciences and can be read independently of the other seven chapters in which the basic theses defended in the book are illustrated and substantiated with the help of examples taken from the history of the natural sciences. (pp. 15-16)

The book consists of three major parts: "Theory of Natural Science" (pp. 17-185), "Theory of the History of Science and the Sciences of History" (pp. 187-385), and "The Scientific-Technological and the Mythical Worlds" (pp. 395-426). In the first part Hübner introduces the reader to the basic questions concerning the foundations of the natural sciences by a brief critical reflection on three positions taken in the past in regard to these questions, namely Hume's skepticism, Kant's transcendentalism, and Reichenbach's operationism. These critical reflections clearly show the problematic character of the natural sciences. The views developed by Hume, Kant, and Reichenbach no longer satisfy us today; yet what concerned them in these reflections, which to a large degree were inspired by a concern for the numinal and for the arts, also, still concerns us today in a manner that is certainly not less urgent. (pp. 19-33)

To prepare the ground for his own conception of these issues Hübner illustrates the problematic character of modern, natural science concretely with the help of a critical analysis of the law of causality in quantum mechanics (pp. 34–43). The dispute between the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics and Bohm's theory of hidden variables cannot be resolved on empirical grounds alone; and philosophically it can be shown that both interpretations have serious difficulties (pp. 43–51). From a careful analysis of these difficulties it appears that the causality principle is really no more than a practical, methodical postulate and that scientific theories are really no more than human constructions that are determined by principles and postulates of different kinds. But this means that no scientific theory expresses the ontological structure of the real world; every scientific theory is really no more than a possible interpretation of a set of data on the basis of certain practical postulates. (pp. 51–54)

This obviously does not mean that scientific claims have no foundation; it merely implies that this foundation cannot be given by a simple appeal to 'the facts' alone. For the fundamental statements of a science do not express mere facts, nor can they be proven by such facts alone. Even a conflict between two different theories concerning the same realm of phenomena cannot be settled by an appeal to mere facts because of the incommensurability involved in the manner in which both theories define the facts. This means that scientific theories themselves are never verified or falsified by facts, and that every scientific theory necessarily implies some *a priori* determinations. One of the basic questions of the philosophy of science is related to the justification of these stipulations *a priori*. (pp. 54–71)

To find an answer to this question Hübner turns to a careful analysis of Duhem's conception of scientific theories, a conception that was developed at a time when the theory of science and the history of science were still closely related to one another. Following Duhem the author defends the view that the study of the history of science is of vital importance for any theory about empirical science; the final justification for a physical theory is to be found in its own origin and historical development. Duhem had interpreted this to mean that every physical theory constitutes a picture of the universe that is a function of a certain interpretative translation mechanism and the observed facts. As such this picture is historical; it originates from a specific historical situation and will disappear again when this situation changes. Yet the construction of the theory is not historical insofar as every 'good' theory in its classification reflects a natural order and insofar as the construction itself is carried out on the basis of principles and guidelines carefully determined by the scientific *bon sens*. Hübner denies that the development of scientific theories is guided by a goal prescribed once and for all by a scientific *bon sens*, or measured unequivocally by an ontological order. The historical development of scientific theories goes through revolutionary phases that are determined by physical, methodical, mathematical,

and even extra-scientific factors (metaphysical, political, theological, and others). Thus Duhem's theory is to be broadened in order to make room for several determinations that are neither logically, nor ontologically or transcendentally necessary. They are not even necessarily prescribed by a scientific *bon sens*; they can be explained *only historically* in that they to some extent are contingent stipulations.

These stipulations may be of at least five different types: instrumental determinations (what is a valid measuring result?), functional stipulations (how to formulate functions and laws in light of observations), axiomatic determinations (how to formulate axioms from which laws may be derived logically), judicatory stipulations (when do experiments indeed falsify a theory), and normative determinations (what characteristics must scientific theories have in order to be scientifically acceptable?). How these stipulations were established can be shown only historically. Furthermore, these stipulations do not tell us anything about the manner in which nature is 'in itself'; they merely establish how nature is to be interpreted scientifically. By means of these stipulations the scientific community projects a theoretical framework precisely on the basis of which scientific research becomes possible. (pp. 73-96)

The next chapter is devoted to a comparison of the astronomies proposed by Ptolemy, Kepler, and Newton. Hübner first shows that Kepler's *Astronomia Nova* rests on questionable empirical data and on a number of assumptions, some of which are scientific in character, whereas others are of a philosophical or even theological nature (pp. 97-114). According to the theories of science developed by Carnap, Popper, and Lakatos, Kepler's astronomy is really inferior to that of Ptolemy and even unacceptable as a genuine scientific theory. On the basis of the criteria which these authors have stipulated, Kepler should have rejected his own theory in favor of Ptolemy's. Furthermore, it is also false to claim that Newton's law of gravitation can be derived from Kepler's laws by inductive generalization. The transition from Kepler's to Newton's theory can be used to illustrate the basic theses of the history of science, not those of a logic of science. Finally, these examples illustrate clearly that the theory of science without the history of science is empty, whereas history of science without philosophical reflection is blind. (pp. 114-133)

Hübner concludes the first part of the book by reflecting critically on the historical foundations of quantum mechanics (chapter 6) and the attempt to resolve its basic problems by an appeal to a special quantum logic (chapter 7). According to the author, the dispute between Bohr and Einstein clearly shows that modern scientists, contrary to classical scientists, tend to avoid a *serious* discussion about philosophical assumptions, although they constantly flirt with philosophical ideas. Influenced by the spirit of positivism they try to avoid metaphysical speculations, not realizing that basic philosophical assumptions which remained unexamined underlie their own interpretations of the phenomena. Also, they do not sufficiently realize that in science,

like everywhere else, there are no absolute facts, but merely facts with respect to certain assumptions.

Thus the dispute about the foundations of quantum mechanics again shows that man, even in science, cannot avoid making use of certain axioms and stipulations *a priori*; these are the conditions of the possibility of scientific experience. Kant was the first one fully to realize this, but he made the mistake of believing that ideally there can be only one such set of axioms and determinations, and that this set flows with necessity from the categories of pure reason itself. Hübner is convinced that the history of science has shown clearly that the axioms and principles underlying scientific theories cannot be proven logically, metaphysically, or transcendentally, simply because they are not necessary assumptions. True, they are not completely arbitrary either, and this is the reason why they can be justified historically. Anyone who wishes to understand a scientific theory must focus on two different but related data: a certain experimental situation in science and a certain theoretical situation connected with a scientific tradition that is still alive. By so doing one will avoid making a theory an absolute (pp. 134-167). One will then also understand why any attempt to resolve the dispute between Bohr and Einstein by an appeal to a special three-valued logic cannot succeed in principle. (pp. 168-185)

The second part of this rich book deals with a theory of the history of science and the sciences of history (*Geisteswissenschaften*). Hübner first carefully formulates the foundations of a general theory of the empirical sciences (pp. 189-199) and then exemplifies this theory with two examples taken from the history of natural science, namely Descartes' and Huygens' collision theories (pp. 221-242) and various interpretations of relativistic cosmology (pp. 243-272). It is obvious that Hübner's reflections on the meaning and function of the history of science are influenced by the discussion between Kuhn, Popper, Feyerabend, Lakatos, Sneed, and Stegmüller. This explains why Hübner, after giving an outline of his own position and clarifying it with a few examples, concludes this part of the book with a critical reflection on Popper's theory of truth (pp. 273-290) and Stegmüller's theory on the structure and dynamics of scientific theories (pp. 291-303). Hübner finally concludes this part of the book with a systematic account of his own view on the theoretical foundations of the historical sciences (pp. 304-358).

Under the influence of ideas of the Enlightenment and modern positivism, empirical science in our western world gradually came to occupy the position once held for many centuries by theology. Many scientists were, and many still are, convinced that empirical science is the genuine road toward the truth. Both empiricism and rationalism have contributed to this scientific optimism, the former by stressing ultimate facts, the latter by focusing on eternally true principles. This optimism, however, rests on an illusion. There are no absolute facts and no eternally true principles. Both are in-

tegral parts of complex theories and the latter are really interpretations. Facts are facts only within theories; they thus change when the relevant theories change. On the other hand, theories are deeply influenced by the historical situation in which they developed. It is therefore incorrect to believe that over time science presents us with an ever better or ever more encompassing explanation of an unchanging realm of empirical data; and there is no reason to believe that one day we shall reach a theory-free truth. These ideas, already suggested in the first part of the book, must now be incorporated into a general theory of scientific theories so that it will be possible systematically to analyze the logical structure of the claims made in scientific theories and show that the views defended here in this regard do not lead to relativism and skepticism.

A systematic development of such a theory requires the introduction of an adequate set of categories which Hübner now introduces. By a *historical system* he understands a historically developed system of rules for scientific research in regard to a certain realm of phenomena; in the ideal case such a system can be formulated axiomatically. By a *set of systems* he understands a structured and ordered set of several present or past systems. Finally, a *historical situation* is a historical epoch determined by a set of such systems. The term 'set' is used here as a regulative idea, because the systems of a set are often to some degree in conflict with one another; sometimes they are incommensurable, sometimes they are even contradictory. (pp. 189-199)

One may then say that the development in the empirical sciences originates from the discrepancy between the systems constituting a set. Thus the 'movement' in a science is essentially a form of self-movement of a set of systems. This self-movement cannot be understood in terms of Hegel's necessitating dialectic; yet this self-movement is not inherently irrational either. This can be clarified by the following structural laws: 1) In each empirical science every historical epoch is determined by a set of historical systems. 2) Each set is unstable because of the tension between the systems constituting the set. 3) Change in a science takes place because the scientific community attempts to eliminate inadequacies and inner tensions. 4) This is done by adapting one or some part(s) to others. 5) However, this process is not determined in a strict sense. 6) The limits of the determination are set in each case by the leeway that the system's 'vagueness' leaves open. 7) Every historical event takes place within a set of systems so that nothing absolutely new can be brought in.

What is being described here is not an empirical theory about the history of science; the principles mentioned are principles *a priori* which the science 'history' must use if it is to describe and explain historical events with the help of its own theoretical constructs. They articulate *a priori* schemata of scientific research, of scientific experience as such. (pp. 200-207) This historical way of looking at scientific claims is not necessarily a relativistic one, because it maintains that one can always judge about true or false

claims within a given set of theories (pp. 207-210). What Kuhn calls 'periods of normal science' are really those periods in which the set of systems is increasingly structured and ordered; on the other hand, 'paradigm changes' are really mutations of systems that can be explained from the historical situation in which they occur. Thus both the articulating ordering and the mutation are rational changes and both may constitute progress in that they at least in principle contribute to an increasing harmonization of a set of systems. Yet in neither case is the development continuous and continually increasing toward some final *telos*. (210-220)

The chapter that is devoted to a reflection on the theoretical foundations of the *Geisteswissenschaften* is in some ways one of the most essential in the book. The question that the author tries to answer here is the following: What kind of theory is essential in the historical sciences? Many authors have claimed that the historical sciences focus on the particular and individual, whereas the natural sciences concern themselves with the universal; history understands, science explains. Others, particularly Anglo-Saxon philosophers, believe that the historical sciences also give us genuine explanations that make use of general laws of some kind. (pp. 304-305)

The author agrees with those who defend the *verstehen*-theory that the particular with which the historical sciences concern themselves is in some sense also something universal even though the universal rests in this case on 'laws' made by man. Those who stress the explanation-theory correctly show that historians very often make use of genuine laws, even though these laws are really biological, psychical, or social in character. Yet the hermeneutic philosophers failed to explain the nature of the universal implied in the historical sciences, whereas analytic philosophers fail to explain the specifically historical that is not found in any other empirical science. According to Hübner the specifically historical and the universal that is characteristic of the historical sciences cannot consist of strict laws (because they are taken from other sciences and usually not even made explicit by historians), but in sets of rules of relatively limited validity, rules for every aspect and domain of a man's life from the religious dimension to playing cards, rules that necessarily refer to the past, to a certain tradition, and, thus, can be understood only historically. (pp. 305-318)

Thus, notwithstanding all the differences between the natural and the historical sciences, there are many basic characteristics which as sciences they have in common. The natural sciences employ universal theories that imply universal laws. There are no such theories and laws in the historical sciences. Yet in the historical sciences there are genuine theories, too, but instead of universal laws they contain man-made rules. We may thus say that the theories of the natural and the historical sciences have basically the same logical form, show basically the same epistemological problems, and employ basic principles that can and must be explained historically. In the historical sci-

ences the *axiomatic* principles which constitute the core of a theory are principles a priori, that is, they make the knowledge of certain realms of facts possible and they can thus not be falsified by these facts; facts are facts only in light of these axiomatic principles. The *judicatory* principles stipulate the conditions under which theories are to be accepted or rejected in light of *interpreted* facts, whereas the *normative* principles determine what does and what does not fall under a given theory. These principles, too cannot be based on experiences, because precisely they make our scientific experiences possible. (pp. 318-328) Furthermore, in the historical sciences the empirical and the a priori are as intimately interwoven as they are in the natural sciences (pp. 329-331). Finally, historical systems also change either through articulating explication or through mutation. (pp. 331-340)

The core problem of the historical sciences, namely that of the justification of their basic a priori principles, can now be resolved. Yet here, too, there can be no absolute or transcendental justification; nor is there a justification by means of experiences, because the principles precisely are the conditions of these experiences. Their justification can be found in other historical systems, predominantly in that of the historian himself. In Hübner's view, the historical sciences could arise only after a normative conception of science was already developed in regard to other realms of facts. The axiomatic principles of the historical sciences were factually derived from philosophy and theology, and to some degree even from the natural sciences. (pp. 340-343)

In the historical sciences which are never definitive, the past is always a function of the present. History does not try to establish exactly how things have been in the past; it tries to show the meaning of past events in light of the present of the historian. This is the reason why history is to be rewritten time and again. The subject matter of historical research obviously does not change, but it is continually shown in relation to other, later events and situations. Thus here, too, there is no eternal truth and there is no point in trying to determine what once 'really' was the case. Yet there is truth and there are genuine experiences here, also, and they result from the interaction between former and ever-new justifiable networks of a priori principles. (pp. 343-358)

The last part of this stimulating book is devoted to a study of the relationship between our scientific-technological world and the mythical world. According to the author the origin and development of *modern* technology was influenced by Christianity as well as by the rise of exact science. Exact natural science is as such already oriented toward a technical mastery of nature. Typical of modern technology which was made possible by exact science is the fact that it is permeated by theoretical knowledge and by the fact that technical possibilities can now be studied systematically. This type of technology has created a new type of man, the inventor. Cybernetics is the modern technology par excellence. (pp. 361-369)

Theorized technology is determined by its stress on progress and exactitude. As such, it was able to fill human needs and help modern man achieve certain goals; but it equally contributed to the creation of new goals and needs. In the long run modern technology led to mass production and mass consumption and, thus, began to dominate modern society which, partly because of it, believes itself to be a society tending toward increasing rationalization.

Philosophers have evaluated modern technology both positively and negatively. For some, technology means freedom, progress, autonomy, emancipation, and humanization; for others it often means loss of freedom, depersonalization, dehumanization, social technocracy, and bureaucratization. Both camps are obviously correct in part; technology means progress in a certain sense, yet at the same time it places people in a totally different position in regard to their own traditions. In Hübner's view the meaning of modern technology can be understood only historically. Once the genuine meaning of modern technology is so understood, it is then possible to explain the positive possibilities opened up by futurology and decision theory as well as their intrinsic limitations. It is of vital importance to ask these questions about technology, futurology, and decision theory because the self-understanding of modern man has been more deeply influenced by technology than by the leading sociopolitical systems, capitalism and socialism. (pp. 369-379, 379-388, 388-394)

The book concludes with some critical reflections on the significance of Greek *mythos* in the modern era of science and technology. Many people who today reflect on the foundations of modern science and technology no longer share the optimistic view promoted by positivism. To find a possible answer to the many problems raised by science and technology, it seems important to turn to a critical reflection on the era of our western tradition in which science for the first time appeared as a rational alternative to myth. This reflection will perhaps enable man to establish in the modern world the relationship between science, religion, and art. Hübner first attempts to determine in what the mythical conception of world precisely consists and what categories determine its mode of understanding; he then tries to show how these categories relate to those underlying man's scientific conception of world. He finally shows how the original mythical interpretation of world was gradually destroyed by the scientific conception. (pp. 395-421)

Does all of this mean that today we must choose between science and myth? One thing is clear, both science and myth make human experiences possible; thus this question cannot be decided on the basis of experience. Furthermore, it is false to call myth irrational and science rational, because both are the work of human reason. It is true that myth and science are mutually incommensurable; thus, we do not have a measure that can help in comparing both, if this measure is supposed to transcend both. Does this mean that we cannot decide between them? The historical mutation that led

from myth to science makes it impossible for man to return to a mythical stage. Yet the question about the truth of science may bring man again to a position in which he can take the mythical (and with it the numinal and the arts) seriously. In a time in which the truth of science and technology is being questioned and their problematic character is stressed on very good grounds, it is important in Hübner's view to recognize once again this very possibility. The author admits that these ideas demand a more careful reflection and, thus, promises to return to them in a future publication. (pp. 421-426)

The book contains an index of names (pp. 427-430) and a very helpful index of subjects (pp. 431-442).

In my opinion Hübner's critique of scientific reason is very important, in that it systematically focuses on a set of problems that are of vital interest to modern man. Hübner deals with some basic issues of modern science and technology that confront us, in a manner that shows concern for a dimension very seldom touched on in most modern philosophical treatises on science and technology.

Throughout the book there runs a thesis that is very appealing to a hermeneutic phenomenologist, even though the author never mentioned phenomenology or hermeneutic philosophy. This thesis is that all forms of man's understanding, including the scientific ones, are really no more than forms of interpretation on the basis of certain assumptions. In the case of the sciences the basic questions, therefore, are: Under what conditions can a scientific interpretation of phenomena be taken to be a legitimate interpretation? What are the limits to be imposed on this kind of interpretation? Is it correct to claim that this kind of interpretation makes all other types of interpretation superfluous? These issues were raised in this form first by Dilthey and later treated more systematically by Husserl, Heidegger, and Gadamer; today they have become common themes in the phenomenological and hermeneutic literature. Hübner himself developed similar ideas in close relationship with insights proposed by logical empiricism, analytic philosophy, critical rationalism, and neo-Kantianism. The works of Carnap, Popper, Kuhn, Lakatos, and Stegmüller form the general framework in which Hübner critically formulates his own views. Yet this general framework itself was determined decisively by Hübner's reinterpretation of Kant's critique of reason, as the title of Hübner's book clearly suggests.

Be this as it may, from this basic thesis other theses can be derived which I take to be of great importance: 1) Empirical science is not the one and only road toward 'the' truth. 2) Philosophy is not to be reduced to a critical reflection on the sciences alone, and even less to a logic or methodology of the empirical sciences. 3) No genuine solutions to the problems with which the empirical sciences confront us will be found by an appeal to metaphysics.

4) Logic, methodology, and epistemology of science should go hand in hand with the history (and sociology) of science, if one is to understand modern science genuinely in its real possibilities and limitations. 5) The rise and the historical development of modern science is determined neither by formal logic (Carnap) nor by transcendental logic (Kant); rather it is 'determined' by human decisions about certain basic issues that may depend on, and thus can be justified through, a critical analysis of a great number of factors, some of which will be logical, methodological, or philosophical in nature, and others that may be theological, sociopolitical, or even economical in character.

Yet it seems to me that Hübner, like Kuhn, does not sufficiently realize that both the rise and the historical development of modern science have constantly been guided by an ideal of scientific reason. True, this ideal was at first seldom made explicit. When it was made explicit, it was not always articulated in the same manner. It is true also that its implications have been understood in a different manner in different epochs of science's history. It is even true that logic, methodology, and epistemology are in principle unable *fully* to articulate and justify this ideal of scientific reason. Yet it is true also that science from the very beginning set out to achieve a certain *telos* that, all changes over time notwithstanding, was never abandoned and has given modern man the possibility of continually evaluating scientific progress. This does not at all exclude the possibility of our evaluating this progress in a manner that is different from that in which it was measured in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Thus, even though I agree with Hübner's criticism of part of Duhem's conception of scientific theories, I nonetheless feel that, like Kuhn, he underestimates the possibilities inherent in logic, methodology, and epistemology for the explication of our modern idea of scientific reason. In other words, it seems to me that the author fails to explain what is typical for the *history of science* as opposed to the history of art or of politics.

It seems to me that the examples from the history of science, with the help of which Hübner exemplifies his basic theses, are very well chosen, indeed. They concretely illustrate the basic theoretical claims made. How far these examples are acceptable, from a historico-critical point of view, is to be determined by concrete historical research. As far as I myself am familiar with the 'facts,' my judgment about Hübner's historical illustrations is very positive.

Yet I disagree with Hübner's evaluation of Stegmüller's and Sneed's theory concerning the structure and dynamics of scientific theories. In my view, logical and mathematical reflections of the type used by these authors are capable of showing us something important about the structure and the historical development of scientific theories. It seems to me that Stegmüller's basic concern is not to substitute logic for history, but merely to prove that history of science and logic of science are not incompatible, as Kuhn seems to claim they are. In other words, I am convinced that this kind of research

can show convincingly that the rationality gaps, which according to Popper and Lakatos are to be found in Kuhn's account of the history of science, do not really exist, and that the latter's account of the history of science does not sufficiently do justice to the function of reason in periods of both normal science and scientific revolution.

It seems to me also that Hübner cannot be correct when he claims that the statements, laws, and principles of scientific theories do not constitute claims about reality. It seems to me that legitimate interpretations of things and events are obviously interpretations of the meaning of something that is the case. They obviously relate to 'real' things and events and (in most cases at least) they are legitimate interpretations of these 'real' things and events. Even if scientific theories are no more than *possible* interpretations of the world of things and events, they are still valid interpretations of what is the case to the degree that experiments did not falsify our claims.

Another basic weakness of Hübner's position is that he does not make an explicit distinction between the natural, the behavioral, the social, and the historical sciences. I do not see any possibility of reducing the behavioral and the social sciences to either the natural or the historical sciences. Both the behavioral and the social sciences involve problems that are not encountered in the natural and historical sciences. Psychologists and sociologists will be very disappointed when they find no reference to their disciplines in a critique of scientific reason.

Even though I find many of the claims made by Hübner very connatural, I have nonetheless been asking myself to what extent Hübner really proves his basic claims. It is one thing to propose several theses and illustrate them with historical examples; it is quite another thing to concretely justify such theses with the strongest possible 'arguments.' In some instances Hübner seems to be unable to completely justify his claims and this is because he refrains from developing a *systematic ontology* that concerns itself with basic issues about 'reality,' meaning, and truth.

One final set of reflections. In the last chapter of his book Hübner turns to Greek myth to explain the relationship between science, art, and religion. It seems to me that empirical science is a typical product of modern man that does not have a strict parallel in the Greek world. But if this is the case, it makes little sense to return all the way to the sixth or fifth centuries B.C. in an attempt to understand the limits that inherently are to be imposed on modern science and technology. Also, are the ideas proposed by Cassirer and some of his followers indeed so universal in nature that they can be used to clarify the extremely important and complex issues concerned with the relationship between science, philosophy, religion, and art?

In conclusion, in my opinion Hübner's critique of scientific reason is a very important and thought-provoking book which undoubtedly will have great impact on future developments in philosophy of science.



# STANLEY ROSEN, *G. W. F. HEGEL: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SCIENCE OF WISDOM*

New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974, 302 pp.

Klaus Hartmann

Translated by Vincent McCarthy

This is a very rich but also very willful Hegel book. The author views it as an introduction, whereas it may be fully intelligible to only a small circle of philosophers.

For orientation, the author refers to Hegel's place in intellectual history and to his *Philosophy of History*. Hegel's critique of analytical thought and the integration of such thought in his philosophy are traced historically to the tension between antiquity and Christianity on the one hand and modern science on the other. A first systematic theme, that of the Whole, is introduced in this context (pp. 35-43).

The author's discussion of systematic points continues with an analysis of the subject-object opposition which Hegel seeks to bridge in his own particular way. If the idealist cannot understand objectivity, neither can the realist subjectivity (p. 48). A one-sided solution is ruled out. The Hegelian solution appears as one that grasps the relationship of subject and object as the identity of identity and non-identity (p. 61)—a well-known Hegelian thesis that is reached in a survey of Fichtean and Schellingian positions.

For closer examination of the Hegelian Dialectic, the author goes into the principle of contradiction (pp. 64-88). Although analytic or scientific thought is characterized by the avoidance of contradiction, Rosen nonetheless advocates the thesis that asserting this principle, because it is the activity of a subject, is already its breach: the subject *S* becomes *P* and non-*P* (p. 65); if the subject thinks *P*, he also simultaneously thinks *P* as non-*P*. Judgment is understood quite generally as contradiction: in it are contained 'S is *P*' and 'S (by itself) is non-*P*' (p. 65). In the opinion of the author, identity and predication prove to be the contradictory results of two contradictory steps: on the one hand, the validity of the law of contradiction is asserted; on the other, this law is dissolved into the laws of identity and of the excluded middle (*S* is *P* or non-*P*), which do not reunite into the law of contradiction.

This peculiar line of interpretation occurs again in Rosen's analysis of the three theorems of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* of 1794 (pp. 92–104). The second theorem appears there as the principle of difference (p. 98), which is said to be equal to the law of the excluded middle (p. 89); and the third theorem figures as the unity of the principle of identity, or first theorem, and the principle of difference, this is to say, the law of contradiction, no matter how imperfect Fichte's integration regarding the logical continuity of the three theorems (p. 103f.). Later, Hegel will establish the continuity of the three theorems in his conception of 'reflection' (a point already made by R. Kroner) and demonstrate the (necessary?) contradiction as the identity of identity and non-identity (p. 104). Fichte, it is said, actually reconstructs an Aristotelian position (the principle of the—excluded?—contradiction), but in this succeeds only by means of a synthesis not subject to the form of which it is the synthesis. In order to claim the principle of contradiction as principle of the unity of subject and object and principle of the movement of the concept, Hegel will require, in this view, an agent or agency not subject to a *form*, namely, negativity as the unity of negation and the negation of negation.

One may differ as to the relationship of the law of identity, the law of contradiction, and the law of the excluded middle. Thus this law of the excluded middle may have to be taken in a sense different from that of the author: it denies a middle, it posits the alternatives of *P* and non-*P*, but is precisely not—as the principle of limitation in fact is—a principle of something other than *P* as implicated by *P* so as to make *P* determinate. Apart from the fact that Fichte meant to reconstruct the law of contradiction with the second theorem and not with the third, one may cite H. Wagner's reconstruction of the logical principles according to which the law of the excluded middle follows upon the law of the (necessary and excluded) contradiction, leading on to the principle of limitation and, finally, to the principle of dialectic—taken as the principle that, in avoiding contradiction, generates movement of the concept (*Philosophie und Reflexion*, §§ 13–15). What is more, in a sequence of this kind the author's thesis concerning negativity as an activity incapable of discursive control would be invalidated since in the principles of limitation and dialectic, negativity is tied to form. (This may be said even if one disagrees with Wagner's view of the dialectic as one of genus and species.)

In Rosen's view, the dialectic is not a device for avoiding contradiction by positing ever higher concepts, but rather a scheme for interpreting the structure of judgment. Hegel's idea of the speculative sentence indeed lends support to this view (even if Rosen does not discuss it), but what is not sufficiently clear is that Hegel achieves a new concept out of an opposition of concepts regarded as a contradiction and that therefore negativity is by itself form in terms of Being-for-itself, Essence, and Concept. That negativity may serve to account for the categorial nature of concepts is altogether foreign to

Rosen. One also misses here a discussion of the problem of mere contrariety in Hegelian oppositions and of their "sharpening" (R. Kroner) to the point of contradiction. And although the author is otherwise familiar with recent and most recent German secondary literature, the entire literature concerning the problem of negation and otherness (especially in H. Rickert, H. Wagner, and W. Flach) is left out of consideration.

As a result, negativity is an abstract activity that can do everything, which constantly advances until it finally terminates in the Absolute. That it terminates appears to be attested to by a higher understanding of the concept of the Whole which Hegel is said to have: the author examines the concept of the class of all classes and advocates the thesis that while something finite, or a self-identical static structure, can be covered by the concept of class, this is not so for a Whole (p. 39). Hegel's procedure is understood as the thesis that the formation rule for classes is itself included in the theory (p. 39). Rosen thinks that only in this way can a Whole be accounted for. However, this suggestion cannot count as a demonstration that negativity terminates. To do this, one would have to discuss *Being-for-itself* as resulting logically from *Being-in-itself* and an *Other*, and not as an effect of an agency. And in doing this one would have to consider Hegel's scheme of opposition and cancellation (*Aufhebung*) of concepts designed as a form for conceptual forms (categories). Instead, the author paradoxically indulges in a Fichtean reading of the Hegelian *Logic* in which negativity is not capable of any rational grasp, however much it is supposed to afford 'wisdom' or knowledge of the Absolute. Consequently he has no place for the Hegelian *architectonic* as a device of principiation starting from qualitative being; One has only cases of *S*, *P*, and non-*P*. Understandably, an explication of the structure of Hegel's *Logic* falls outside the scope of the work, a few hints notwithstanding.

In place of executing such an explication, Rosen continues his fundamental statements about subject, object, and reflection—later resuscitated in his treatment of the Absolute—with an analysis of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. This analysis (pp. 123–235), confined to themes such as *Logic* and *Phenomenology*, unhappy consciousness, Enlightenment and absolute knowledge, but sufficiently enriched to stand as a portrait of the entire work, is full of subtle interpretations. However, as far as theory is concerned, it simply pursues a succession of reversals according to the pulse-beat of the dialectic. Whether a form of consciousness is compelling as the successor to its antecedent cannot be decided in this fashion; clearly, recourse to a secret 'logic' inherent in the *Phenomenology* (as established, for example, in J. Heinrichs' *Logik der Phänomenologie*) is called for. Basic ontology and architectonic of the *Phenomenology* and of the System at large have not been considered in Rosen's interpretation of Hegel's dialectic.

In the concluding chapter, where criticism comes out into the open, the Fichtean reading of Hegel reappears. The thesis is that negative activity does

not allow analysis (p. 276). (Here Rosen cites and agrees with the views of D. Henrich in *Hegel im Kontext*.) In Rosen's opinion, one stands in need of an intuition that has the forms and the oscillation of forms equally before itself. The reduction of intellectual intuition to concept, which Hegel sought to achieve, is not recognized, indeed a return to intellectual intuition is demanded. What Rosen fails to see is that Hegel wants to make a reconstruction (*Logik* 1, in the Lasson edition, p. 19; see also *Encyclopedia*, § 12 where *Nachbildung* is mentioned) and that this presupposes givenness and, if one will, intuition.

In the final chapter, points relative to system theory are taken up in addition to earlier concerns. Thus Rosen sees a problem in the *anticipation* of the Whole in the course of the movement of the concept, or in the guidance of the movement of concept by the Whole. He also has difficulty with Hegel's entelechy thesis in accordance with which Hegel theorizes the actual presence of rich and perfect determinacy. If, to use the *Philosophy of Right* as an example, Prussia was not the 'entelechy,' then the unity of theory and practice could not be claimed as a pre-given actuality: the philosopher Hegel would merely entertain an alienated conception. Might not a sharper differentiation between Hegelian Systematic and Hegelian *Philosophy of History* have been illuminating? Curiously, Hegel stands superior to modern philosophical thinking, despite Rosen's skepticism—only his superiority would have to be corroborated in a manner different from that inherent in the System. Nonetheless, by drawing attention to problematical positions adopted in the book (such as Rosen's interpretation of logical principles, his Fichtean reading of negativity, his deficient understanding of categoriality, his doubt concerning the reduction of thought to the form of concept), this review does not constitute a full assessment. Rosen's intellectuality affords an abundance of intelligent analyses and interpretations, among which the connections with Plato and Aristotle are perhaps the most important. With its abundance, indeed overabundance, of associations and comparisons, the book is scarcely to be exhausted and so will remain an ever-to-be-consulted witness to critical analysis of Hegel.

#### Translation Note

<sup>i</sup> The word "first" has here been omitted at the author's request (the Editor).

## DIETER HENRICH, *IDENTITÄT UND OBJEKTIVITÄT*

Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1976. 111 pp.

Graham Bird

Dieter Henrich's book is unusual both in its content and in its origins. Henrich himself plainly owes much to the prevailing tradition of German philosophy in the postwar period, but he has also been extensively influenced by the rather different analytic tradition of what he calls the 'Anglo-Saxon' philosophers. He admits the importance of British and American writers on Kant since the 1960s, but is also critical of their shortcomings. Of these limitations he writes: "The Anglo-Saxon authors have remained at a certain distance from the actual course of Kant's argument because they are mostly unfamiliar with his language, and because they have concentrated on a narrow section of Kant's publications, manuscripts, and notes" (p. 14). Both of these complaints have substance, though, as I shall later indicate, such charges are less serious than Henrich implies, and moreover do not always favor Henrich rather than his Anglo-Saxon colleagues. For all that, most of Henrich's notes appeal to views and writers in the analytic tradition. Apart from writers on Kant, for example, Quine, Sellars, and Wittgenstein are referred to in his discussion. This dual background to Henrich's work is of particular interest as a reflection of a transitional process in German philosophy itself. While it would no doubt be wrong to suppose that philosophers in Germany have simply accepted the analytic attitude, they undoubtedly are, as Henrich's interests testify, more influenced now by Anglo-Saxon philosophy than ever before.

This book has to do with two central ideas in Kant's transcendental deduction, namely those of objectivity and self-consciousness. Henrich rightly indicates that his work is not so much a commentary on Kant's text as an outline of a central set of ideas to be found in the text. He divides his account into two parts; an explanation of objectivity and its connection with judgments and forms of judgment, and a discussion of personal identity and simplicity and their connection with the categories. These ideas are, to be

sure, absolutely central to Transcendental Deduction, and though they are presented in both editions of Kant's text, Henrich concentrates more on the first version. In some way, still rightly treated as both puzzling and important by most commentators, Kant wishes in the deduction to connect the ideas of a personal unity, apperception, and the ideas of a conceptual unity, categories. There is one key concept in Kant's work that naturally connects these two unities, namely, synthesis. Henrich's book, although it devotes relatively little space to the links between the two sections, can be seen as an exploration of this central concept of synthesis, of the problems of its relationship to judgments and categories on one hand, and to personal identity on the other.

In Henrich's discussion of the first of these issues several points, distinctions, and provisos are subtly made. He notes the close link Kant makes between objectivity, judgment, and rules, and points to some ambiguities in this connection. One may speak of objects as rule-governed in several distinct ways. Kant's account of rules of synthesis appeals both to his phenomenalist tendencies and to the account of judgments as conjunctions. Henrich acknowledges the importance of a contrast between 'mere ideas' and 'ideas of objects,' and makes much of an allegedly Kantian distinction between appearances and objects. He recognizes the 'constructive' nature of Kant's account of objects and tries to give a clear sense to the tantalizing passage from Kant's *Metaphysical Foundations of the Natural Sciences*, so often cited, in which it is claimed that "the possibility of experience may be elucidated by a single inference from the precisely formulated definition of a judgment in general." He tries further to substantiate Kant's view that the account of objectivity points to an a priori element in the construction of objects of experience, which in turn may represent an answer to empiricist skeptics such as Hume.

Much of Henrich's discussion of these issues involves the frustrating but rigorous rejection of certain tempting, but, as he believes, fallacious inferences. This tough attitude seems to owe much to the Anglo-Saxon analytic side of his background. But he also claims to find some merit in Kant's arguments about the primacy of subject-predicate propositions, their relation to the identity of objects and the ascription to them of properties, and finally their relation to the basic empirical data of sense, construed as discrete presentations of qualities. In order to make out such a case Henrich has to withstand several imagined objections. Are subject-predicate propositions really basic? Might there not be even more elementary assertions to be found in a basic report of the presence of a 'quale,' or sense-datum? Even supposing that these questions can be given answers which support Henrich's view, what is the relation between the presentation of 'qualia' and the assertion of standard subject-predicate propositions?

Henrich's answers to such questions are summarized on pages 42–43 of his book. He claims that his investigation yields the following consequences, not

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otherwise attainable from Kant's arguments. He writes:

"Knowledge, which amounts to 'experience,' is necessarily, by reason of its use of categorical judgments, directed to a conception of phenomena in which many properties are ascribed to a single object . . . Such an experience can never be articulated by mere reports of series of discrete data. It cannot even begin with such reports. For we cannot conceive a level of discourse in which essentially only separate data are mentioned, unless they can be characterised in elementary subject-predicate propositions. If, as Kant supposes, the subject-predicate form is basic, then the data of sense can be mentioned only in connection with complex objects. A theory of pure sense-data, or 'qualia,' must always represent secondary knowledge. . . . The data as such (which Kant calls 'appearances') are not objects, but only denote them. What they denote is so far nothing but the thought of a possible object of judgment. In so far as we make judgments we make immediate reference to objects" (pp. 42-43).

In the second section, dealing with self-consciousness, Henrich's approach is similarly subtle and analytically oriented. It is guided throughout by the belief that Kant attempts in the Transcendental Deduction to derive formally the necessity of a categorial synthesis from reflection upon the fundamental idea of self-consciousness, or apperception. He says, for example, "Kant starts from the premise that self-consciousness is not only the ultimate point of reference for all certainty, but is also a self-sufficient principle for philosophical analysis" (p. 110). As in the first section Henrich's discussion is subtly illuminated by a recognition of many important distinctions and issues relating to the difficult problems of the self and consciousness. He explores at some length a distinction between a Leibnizian 'strict' identity and a looser notion of identity; he contrasts importantly the identity of the self and its simplicity; he tackles the question of the necessity of an identical self for experience, and recognizes the difficulties that would arise for Kant if he were to construe self-consciousness as based on some primal, *a priori*, act of synthesis. Kant, of course, often speaks of such basic acts, and his claim in the first edition of his text that empirical acts of synthesis rest in some way upon a transcendental synthesis may, no doubt, be interpreted in that way. But such claims are likely to founder on Butler's objection that acts of whatever kind presuppose, rather than establish, the identity of the agent.

Despite the dangers and erroneous inferences to be avoided in this complex network of ideas Henrich once again detects some demonstrable merit in Kant's argument. In relation to an argument based on the identity of the self he writes: "It shows that no self-consciousness is possible without the existence of complex thoughts about the subject's ideas, and that these (thoughts) are subject to the same basic conditions which hold *a priori* for consciousness of the transition from one idea to another, and so for the structure of perception" (p. 98). However, for Henrich the identity of the self is not the same as its simplicity. He writes: "The concept of the identity of the self does not entail its simplicity. The latter cannot be derived from the former; rather in order to give a complete account of subjectivity

simplicity must be assumed or presupposed" (p. 99). Once the twin aspects of the self are taken into account important consequences follow. In particular it is claimed that some connection can be found between the rules relating to objectivity in judgments and the rules that are involved in the transition from one idea to another in a subject's consciousness. Henrich brings these strands together in a brief summary:

"In the analysis of objectivity the notion of an object, as distinct from an appearance, was elucidated by means of the formal conditions of judgment. In the analysis of identity it has been shown that self-consciousness is consciousness of rules. It has not, of course, been shown which are the rules through which consciousness of the 'I think' anticipates all transitions from one idea to another. But all the assumptions have been located which would enable us to attempt to identify judgment forms as rules presupposed in consciousness of the identity of the subject" (p. 108).

Henrich's work undoubtedly raises interesting questions about the interpretation of the Transcendental Deduction. If he were right, then he would have established lines of thought in that difficult passage which point promisingly toward an understanding not only of Kant's argument, but also of the still barely understood links between notions such as objectivity, 'self-consciousness,' and 'forms of judgment.' But is his account of Kant acceptable? His book invites at least the following queries.

Henrich is evidently aware of problems of interpreting Kant's text, and even takes the Anglo-Saxon commentators to task for not extending their knowledge of Kant beyond the three *Critiques*. It is, then, somewhat surprising that the textual basis for his own account should be so limited. It rests essentially upon two or three key sentences in the Deduction itself, and even more importantly upon the brief passage from the *Metaphysical Foundations of the Natural Sciences* and a selection of 'Reflexionen.' What is missing from the first set of references is not only a detailed appeal to other aspects of the Deduction, but also other references to passages in the first *Critique* outside the Deduction. What is missing from the second set of references, outside the *Critique*, is any account of the overall pattern of Kantian thought to which they contribute. Of course Henrich is not offering a detailed commentary, and his work should be taken as an instructive and suggestive line of thought which might be further elaborated and more closely tied to that overall pattern of Kantian thought. But in the absence of such a general account very little reliance can be placed upon a brief selection from the *Reflexionen*. The truth is that Kant's later writings, and particularly the *Opus Postumum*, need very considerable attention before they can be relied upon as guides to Kant's earlier arguments. It is for this reason, rather than merely a lack of interest, that Anglo-Saxon commentators have hesitated to make much use of these later writings.

There are two other general points that underline the need for interpretative support from other sections of the *Critique*, and so indicate possible

disagreements with Henrich's approach. The first has to do with his assumption that for Kant appearances are to be distinguished from objects. It seems unlikely that Henrich would wish to reinstate objects in this context as things in themselves, although he does not explicitly deny this. Even so it remains unclear both what his justification for this claim is, and what exactly the contrast amounts to. Kant certainly wishes to distinguish what he calls 'appearances' from what he calls 'phenomena,' even though at the same time he seems to regard appearances as the only objects of which we can have knowledge in experience. Henrich's suggestion that appearances should be regarded as discrete sensory qualities certainly helps to clarify his own view, but more needs to be done to tie such a view to Kant's technical terminology. And this cannot be done without further reference to many other parts of the *Critique*, notably the Aesthetic and the section on 'Phenomena and Noumena.'

The same is also true of an assumption Henrich makes in the second section of his work, dealing with self-consciousness. For it is by no means clear that Kant wished, almost in a Cartesian way, to derive claims about the necessity or a priority of a categorial synthesis solely from the basic principle of the unity of apperception. The obvious difficulty in such a claim is the extent to which it could be reconciled with Kant's criticism of Cartesian thought in the Paralogisms. Whether it can or not, however, the assumption could be assessed only by reference to that section, and to others outside the Deduction that contribute to Kant's account of personality, in particular, the Refutation of Idealism. In this case, as in the account of appearances, Henrich's conclusions need further support from the *Critique* itself even before any appeal can usefully be made to the later writings. It is, however, a measure of the plausibility of Henrich's view that such further support, and the extension of his thesis beyond the Deduction itself, seem to be worth exploring.



FRIEDRICH KAULBACH, *ETHIK UND  
METAETHIK. DARSTELLUNG UND KRITIK  
METAETHISCHER ARGUMENTE*

Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1974. 122 pp.

Kurt Baier

This is a challenging, suggestive, scholarly, and sometimes irritating book. Its main aim is to introduce German philosophical readers to the apparently increasingly popular work of Anglo-American moral philosophers of the analytic mainstream, to subject this work to a sustained criticism (which is often acute and sometimes original) from a Kantian point of view, and incidentally to make that point of view palatable. The author has also written a book about Kant in which that point of view no doubt is more fully explained and defended. Unfortunately I have not been able to obtain that book before writing this review, and so may occasionally have misinterpreted Kaulbach's intentions.

The title and subtitle are somewhat misleading (it is much broader and more interesting than the two titles suggest) since the author's use of 'metaethics' is slightly different from that in the current Anglo-American literature: For by 'metaethics' he means not a certain detached, morally neutral approach to morality which can be found in any moral philosopher, but rather the entire moral philosophy of a certain group of recent analytic philosophers, of whom the best known are Ayer, Stevenson, and Hare, including their normative ethical views (for example, Hare's utilitarianism), and their philosophical views on various types and senses of ethical theory, including their views on the distinction between ethics or normative ethics, and metaethics. Kaulbach makes the sound point that a better name for what these philosophers primarily practiced would have been 'metamorality,' since they reflect on the thinking and talking of moral agents (p. 42). He goes on to say that metaethics is thus on the same (the first) meta-level relative to morality as traditional ethics, but differs from the latter in that it does not share with the first-level moral speaker "a language of obligatoriness and universal validity" (p. 42), but distances itself from practical language, makes it its object of study, and assumes a position of

neutrality. Fair enough, though one could add that the ethicist might do other things as well. He might for instance be engaged in a normative-evaluative discussion with another disagreeing ethicist, (say, a utilitarian versus a contractarian) without having or knowing what if any first-order moral disagreement he has with the other, and so in this sense be morally neutral or uncommitted. Nevertheless, in such a case neither ethicist may consider himself simply an analyst of the language of practice. Both may regard themselves as improvers, not merely recorders, of the ordinary practices of supporting and attacking (though not of expressing) moral opinions.

From the point of view of the Anglo-American reader, the structure of the book is unfortunate. It begins in a preface with a highly-condensed survey of the book as a whole, in which the author's own position is contrasted with that of meta-ethics. Chapter 1 does more or less the same, at much greater length. In chapters 2-4, the views of Bradley, Moore, Ayer, Stevenson, Hare, and (briefly) Baier are clearly, fairly, and perceptively summarized, their weaknesses exposed often interestingly, and linked with their greater or lesser deviations from the author's own Kantian position. Chapter 5, the last chapter, is more diffuse and less easily summarized. Perhaps it is not unfair to say that in it, the author tries indirectly to support his own central position by a comparison of the analyses of three concepts—freedom, conscience, and action—by various metaethicists and by himself, with a view toward showing that only his own position can give a satisfactory account of these central moral ideas, or as he wants to put it, these moral things (pp. 175f.). This is unfortunate because in order to come to grips with the author's own views, the Anglo-American reader has to wade through a good deal of exposition of very familiar material.

The book touches on many important topics and has illuminating or challenging things to say on most. It is written clearly and elegantly, but on a very high level of abstraction, with few examples and few clearly spelled-out arguments. The same themes are repeatedly touched on, and clarification is achieved in this cumulative way, so one's irritation at being left hanging is often, but by no means always, removed as one reads on. The author is familiar with a great deal of Anglo-American moral theory. In addition to the authors already mentioned, he refers to, cites, and in some cases critically examines some views of Broad, Frankena, Gewirth, Ladd, Nowell-Smith, Urmson, Feinberg, Kenny, and others. But there are surprising omissions. Thus, although the book is greatly preoccupied with what the author regards as the insights and even more the errors of linguistic analysis, and although he himself in an important analysis stresses something like J. L. Austin's performative uses of certain key terms (p. 171), Austin's work is not referred to or discussed and his work is not mentioned in the bibliography. It is similarly surprising that G. E. M. Anscombe's highly influential book *Intention* is not mentioned or referred to in the author's discussion of the concept of action. The book appeared in 1974, but the history to which the

author introduces his readers covers the period from 1890-1960 and peters out in the early sixties well before the work of Rawls and the widespread return of analysts to normative ethics. It is a pity the author was not able to give some hints about his reaction to Rawls's very different Kantian approach.

In this review, I shall concentrate on the main theme of the book, the contrast between Kaulbach's own Kantian position and that of empiricist analytic philosophers whom Kaulbach calls metaethicists on the nature of practical reason and moral thinking. This means that I shall have to ignore many important topics, especially the interesting and involved discussions, in the last chapter, of conscience and action, which are relatively self-contained and only loosely joined to the main theme of the book, and also the analysis of freedom that, though closely connected with the book's central Kantian theme, is too complex to be usefully summarized or to be adequately examined in a review. The language of the book is often difficult and I have therefore frequently resorted to direct quotation, and where I was unable to convey the flavor of the original, to quote that also.

The book begins, in chapter 1, with the author's own position which may be summed up in the following five main theses: (1) all practical thinking presupposes a stand on the ground (*Boden*—this is Husserl's term) of practical reason, because practical reason is the very principle of giving reasons (*Begründung*) and of justification (*Rechtfertigung*). (2) Practical reason has an objective and a subjective dimension, the former concerned with determining means to already adopted individual ends, the latter with determining ends themselves on the ground of practical reason. (3) Ends themselves are determined by a person from his world perspective which involves a "stand" or standpoint or point of view, that is, several universal principles of action; these embody the universal element of practical reason. (4) The demand of practical reason for universality and commonality does not stop at the individual level: individual stands are not ultimately arbitrary but are themselves subject to the demand for justification which can be given only by a special practical logic. (5) Justification of a stand can be achieved only by an actual historical dialectical-dialogical process whose result is the confirmation or modification of a person's current stand. "One cannot convince another of the obligatoriness of an ought-content by a 'proof.' This task requires, rather that one become engaged with him dialogically in a joint historical process, methodologically guided by ethical science, (mit ihm in eine dialogische, im Zeichen der ethischen Wissenschaft methodisch gelenkte Geschichte einzutreten") in the course of which one gains a perspective from which one perceives the bindingness of one's duty." (p. 46)

Kaulbach sees this dialogical process in the practical field as analogous to what Kuhn has called a "paradigm jump": "progress in the history of stand-taking does not occur in the way in which a science, on the basis and from the horizon of an accepted paradigm, continues to add ever new insights: it

does not in other words happen in a linear process whose steps are subject to the rules of logic. It is, rather, a change of the “paradigms” themselves, to which in the practical sphere correspond the criteria and standards of acting, thinking, and speaking. . . . The history of the revolutions of standards has a dialogical structure: it can be seen as a history of a great comprehensive dialogue within the framework of the common practical reason.” (p. 19)

In chapters 2–4 Kaulbach sketches what he regards as the significant stages in the development of Anglo-American ethics, showing with regard to each of these stages how it falls short in different ways from the position set out in chapter 1. Chapter 2 paints the backdrop against which the major development, metaethics (in the sense explained) must be seen and judged. The two figures discussed are Bradley and Moore. The author himself notes that the inclusion of Bradley may seem surprising to some, but defends it on the grounds that Bradley’s philosophy provides the background against which the peculiarities of metaethics stand out with particular sharpness. It also enables the author to contrast his own dialectical-dialogical view with an objective-dialectical one, such as that which Bradley takes from Hegel.

The main disagreement the author finds between Bradley’s ethics and metaethics (in which he mainly sides with Bradley) is this: Bradley believes that we come to know our duties by means of a common, preceding, and preeminent (*vorgängig*) practical reason whose findings are *a priori* and whose operation involves a dialectical movement of thought, itself a form of action, which drives us beyond the horizon of our “isolated subjectivity” into the realm of the “universal,” a movement by which alone we acquire the perspective from which our practical duties become visible to us. (p. 65) Against this, metaethics isolates the individual vis-à-vis the common and universal, which is construed as the mere agreement which empirical subjects may find together. (p. 63) Thus, metaethics, having artificially isolated individual subjects, confronts the problem of the relation of the individual to the universal. Once the individual is separated from “his universal foundation” (*universalen Grundlage*) which is his “proper reality” (*eigentliche Wirklichkeit*), it is no longer possible to explain moral claims as the expression of an overriding practical reason. Hence in order to satisfy the requirements of intersubjectivity, metaethics must find an “artificial equivalent” for the abandoned dialectical connection with the universal. Metaethics finds that equivalent in the empirical commonality of the practical meaning of language development in the relevant language game (p. 64).

I am not wholly persuaded by all this. Might not a supporter of metaethics ask why he should accept Kaulbach’s view that the isolation of the subject is “artificial” or that the proper reality of the subject is his “universal foundation”? I take it that Rational Egoism involves the most radical separation of the subject from the practical universal, but I am not aware of any successful demonstration that such a position involves not a perfectly natural

but an artificial (and so philosophically erroneous?) separation of the individual from his proper foundation. I am persuaded that recent attempts by Anglo-American philosophers (including Thomas Nagel's brilliant book, *The Possibility of Altruism*) have failed in this. In fact, Kaulbach himself, surprisingly, considers metaethics to have advanced over the Hegelian-Bradleyan position, when it emphasizes, in contrast with Bradley, the *dialogical* structure of practical thinking and talking. The advance lies in this. Whereas Hegel and Bradley conceive of the dialectic of reason as a process in which the Objective Idea realizes itself through negation or contradiction, metaethics points to a dialogical dialectic in which *real empirical (leibhaftig) persons* in the course of an actual historical dialogue modifyingly impinge on one another's attitudes or standpoints. (p. 65) But once such a real dialogue is acknowledged to be the vehicle of practical reason, does not the question then necessarily arise by what logic or by what principles such a dialogue is to be conducted? And once that question is admitted, as it is by Kaulbach, is one not then in the same position as metaethicists, in respect to the problem of whether moral claims are to be seen as the expression of an overriding universal practical reason, in the strong sense of 'universal,' in which Rational Egoism does not satisfy the requirements of such universality? And does not this show that the separation of the individual from the universal is by no means obviously artificial; that its naturalness or artificiality requires very careful examination? It is a weakness of this book that Kaulbach nowhere comes to grips with the very extensive Anglo-American discussions of the problems of Rational Egoism which are close to the heart of his inquiry.

The second background approach, intuitionism, illustrated by Moore's ethics, is introduced, contrasted with Bradley's, and criticized mainly on the grounds that it abandons the Bradleyan model of practical thinking—which represents such thinking as itself a form of action through which we achieve the stand or point of view, from which alone our duties can become visible to us—and replaces it by a totally inadequate, theoretically oriented subject-object model of knowledge, including practical knowledge. According to this model, the acting subject comes to know, by intuition, practical contents that cannot be derived theoretically and that authoritatively claim to determine the subject's actions. Metaethics adopts this general model of knowledge while recognizing that it is unsuitable for the practical realm, and therefore is driven to deny all claims to practical knowledge. "The metaethicist begins with the presupposition of two incompatible alternatives, the scientific rationality of descriptive or cognitive language on the one hand and the irrationality of valuing and decision-expressing language on the other, hence he does not notice the third possibility, decisive for practical rationality, namely, that taking a stand and giving practical reasons are in the same line of business" (p. 43).

According to Kaulbach, intuitionists (such as Moore) and metaethicists

(from Ayer to Hare) make the same mistake, namely, to think that for anything to be an object of knowledge, whether theoretical or practical, it would have to be some “objective content.” Metaethicists advance beyond Moore, however, for they realize that there can be no such objective *practical* contents, but they err in inferring from this (because of the theory-oriented model of knowledge they share with the intuitionists) that there can be no practical *knowledge* at all. Kaulbach’s own solution rests on a different model of practical knowledge (*praktische Erkenntnis*) which according to him is a case of knowing what one ought to do, of knowing what one’s duty is in one’s concrete situation. According to Kaulbach, the only “contents” (*Inhalte*) related to such an “ought” (*Sollen*) are specific, technical, scientifically determined measures, in whose description the “ought” itself does not appear. The “ought” merely indicates the *modality* in which these contents are linguistically adumbrated (*zur Sprache gebracht werden*). The “ought” is not uttered as an objective content, but functions only as the perspective from which the required (*gesollten*) contents are reported. Kaulbach approvingly quotes Kant to the effect that the “ought” is at the same time a willing (*Wollen*) by the agent, if he takes a stand on the ground of practical reason. (p. 66) These points are unfortunately not developed in detail. Kaulbach’s main concern appears to be the closing of the logical gaps between deciding and acting, and between recognizing what one has reason to do and deciding to do it. The author does not appear to be aware of recent work by analytic philosophers, such as Wilfrid Sellars, Hector Neri Castaneda, and Gilbert Harman, who have formulated much more detailed, “internalistically-oriented” (in the Falk-Frankena terminology) accounts of practical reasoning. He does not attend to the quite intricate philosophical and technical problems that all such theories must face.

The next two chapters, (3 and 4) tell the by-now quite familiar story of the reintroduction and development by analytic moralists of practical reasoning, and their related attempts to modify the stark irrationalism of the Emotive Theory. I need not summarize or comment here on Kaulbach’s exposition and critique of Ayer and Stevenson in chapter 3. Suffice it to say that in my opinion, though perfectly clear and fair, they do not on the whole add anything of importance to the existing literature on the subject in English. Chapter 4 in some detail deals with Hare and briefly with Baier. Kaulbach agrees with Hare that moral claims (*Sätze*) can be universalized and that this is a symptom of their “rationality” (p. 130) because they call for justification (*Rechtfertigung*) and for support with reasons (*Begründung*)—which means for Hare no more than that they must be able to be logically derived from universal practical (imperativ) principles. (p. 130) Kaulbach rightly points out that for Hare this account of practical rationality and reasoning raises the difficult question of whether these universal practical principles themselves can be justified or whether they are perhaps merely expressions of immediate and rationally unsupportable views, as is

claimed by the intuitionists. According to him, Hare's answer is the same as that of the later Wittgenstein, namely, that the chain of reasoning must come to an end and that it is "ultimately" anchored in a given form of life. Kaulbach rejects this answer as unsatisfactory because it is hopelessly imprecise (p. 130, especially, note 9). Kaulbach now attempts to show that Hare's universalizability theory raises a difficulty "which can be mastered only by a theory of practical stand-taking (*Theorie des praktischen Standes*) and the practical language appropriate for it." (p. 131) Kaulbach's argument appears to be as follows: According to Hare, it is justifiable to ascribe to practical (that is, moral) thinking the character of rationality because moral utterances are because of their nature universalizable. But this idea "can be given a dialogical interpretation" (p. 131), for universalizability means the capacity of practical sentences to be jointly accepted by the speakers in the course of their dialogue. Accordingly, universal validity of a practical sentence means the universal acceptance of the principle of action implied by it (*seiner Handlungsdevise*). Hare is thus committed to the view that any ought-claim valid for a specific action situation must be regarded as obligatory by any person who is in the same situation. But this raises for Hare a crucial difficulty, for it is questionable "whether a universal ought is even in principle applicable to the individual case, since it is questionable whether the description of an individual situation can be translated into the language of universality." (p. 131) Kaulbach then argues that Hare attempts to solve this problem by the idea that a person who gives advice to another must put himself in the other's place. "The use of this expression [putting himself in the other's place] shows that Hare imposes on those engaged in a practical dialog the task of adopting the stand of the other in order thereby to become able to discover what is to be done in the other's situation" (pp. 131-32). Kaulbach adds, in support of this interpretation, that Hare had noted that putting oneself in the place of another involved a peculiar dimension of practical thinking and talking which is not comprised in logical derivation. (p. 132) Kaulbach thinks that Hare connects universalizability which means validity for all with "the movement of putting oneself in the place of another" (p. 132), and that in Hare's view universalizability involves a claim to obligatoriness (*Verbindlichkeit*) which can become convincing only as a result of putting oneself into the place of another. Kaulbach identifies four elements in Hare's account of practical (= moral) thinking: (1) the facts of the case which determine the framework within which the agent must make his choice; (2) the "logic of ought" which requires the maxim of action to be universally acceptable for all persons in a situation such as is characterized by the facts of the case; (3) the inclinations and interests of all those affected by the action to be performed; and (4) the work of the imaginative putting oneself in the place of the others affected and giving to the inclinations and interests of the others the weight one would give them if they were one's own. (p. 135)

Kaulbach rejects Hare's account of practical thinking mainly because of its empirical and utilitarian character. He insists, in my opinion correctly, on the important differences between Hare's and Kant's universalization. Both insist on universality, but Hare's universality is not a sympathetic act of imagination whereby one puts oneself in the place of another, not, as for Kant a "transcendental" (p. 136) act of placing oneself into the context of practical reason itself, taking a stand on the grounds of the moral world. For Kant, moral thinking demands of me not merely that I put myself sympathetically into the position of the other's interest, but that I judge his situation and mine from the perspective of practical reason itself. Kaulbach approvingly quotes Kant's dictum that in taking a stand on the grounds of practical reason one "translates" (*ersetze sich*) oneself into the personality of reason: "since one feels one is in the realm of the universal and sees one's own individuality as an accidental subject, like an *accidens* of the universal." (p. 138) The Categorical Imperative demands that I think myself into the role of a universal world legislator in order to be able from that position to judge correctly my own situation and what is to be done in it. (p. 138)

Kaulbach here agrees with Kant against Hare. He regards it as a mistake to construe practical reason, as Hare and others in the tradition of metaethics do, as a subjective faculty (*Instanz*) which imagines practical ideas and formulates moral demands in "ought" sentences. Instead, practical reason must be understood and must prove itself as an *actual* history (*Wirklichkeit einer Geschichte*) of action. It is not the sum of practical ideas and images, but the actual movement of deciding and of the representation of the universal a priori on whose ground a stand is made (p. 139). In practical language the agent expresses himself by taking a stand "within the constellation with other agents" (p. 139) and by representing that stand in his practical-rational argumentation. He therefore regards it as a weakness of the metaethical conception of practical thought and speech that it forgets the dimension of self-representation and so neglects the historical actuality and effectiveness of practical reason. Properly understood, the dialogue involved in practical argumentation is not merely an exchange of information and inferences, but also an actual history in which the partners challenge one another to take a stand. The arguments advanced by the partners are therefore not merely ideas ("Vorstellungen"), but at the same time historical *forces*. (p. 140)

In sections 5, 6, and 7 of chapter 4, Kaulbach attempts to show, on the basis of several Harean theses (on the relation between Act- and Rule-utilitarianism, on happiness and imaginative empathy, and on Hare's notion of freedom and moral ideals) that some of the difficulties Hare gets into could be avoided by a modification of his account of practical and moral reasoning in the direction of the Kantian a-prioristic model which Kaulbach himself accepts. One of these arguments is interesting enough to be examined. Kaulbach rejects the view of Hare and that of many analytic writers in

the tradition of metaethics, according to which ethics is morally neutral in that it is simply the detached investigation of the logical properties of moral terms (p. 154), and as such refrains from taking a practical stand. For Hare, ethics (which Kaulbach consistently calls "metaethics") only talks *about* stand-taking, attitudes, prescriptive meanings, and so on. Where the analysis of a moral problem goes beyond the factual and the logical element of the situation into that of the interests affected or the imagination involved in putting oneself in the place of others which is involved in the universalization of a principle of action, there the Harean ethicist (Kaulbach's metaethicist) supposedly does not represent any particular interests or perform acts of imaginative empathy into the interest situation of the others. Leaving aside the relatively trivial question of whether 'ethics' or 'metaethics' or as Kaulbach suggests (p. 42) 'metamorals' is the proper name for this enterprise, the important question remains of whether such a neutral enterprise is possible. According to Kaulbach, it is not possible. The belief is that it rests on a mistake, the mistake, namely, of "identifying the 'logic' of practical thinking and speaking with the logic of theory-formation, instead of construing it dialogically-dialectically and acknowledging a logic of the realization of stand-taking" (p. 154). For, says Kaulbach, such a logic must itself side with the universal that it analyzes and so cannot remain neutral. Hare's own work shows this, for even when he analyzes the practical meanings, he nevertheless supports practical principles (Devisen) "which are in the interest of practical reason as such" (p. 154), among them tolerance, dialogical commitment, freedom in the liberal sense, rejection of fanaticism, and so on. Similarly, the analyst who analyzes the universal cannot isolate and distance himself from it. For when he places himself in a dialogue, he turns out to be not an atomistic subject who surveys from outside "the linguistic meaning-connection of the substantive universality in a dialog" (*den sprachlichen Bedeutungszusammenhang der substantiellen Allgemeinheit des Dialogisierens*) (p. 155) and talks "about" it, but a spokesman who takes a position on the grounds of the universal and speaks from its standpoint. In this way, the subject is also always the advocate of the practical-dialogical principle because he stands *ab initio* in the movement of the dialogue and does not merely talk about the historical unfolding of that dialogue. (155).

These claims raise a doubt in my mind about Kaulbach's conception of metaethics and its relation to morality and moral language. It is not clear to me that Hare's own work shows the impossibility of remaining morally neutral when one is engaged in analyzing the language of practice or morality. For could not Hare insist that when he argues for utilitarianism, he argues as a utilitarian and so does not argue as a metaethicist but as a stand-taking normative ethicist? To be caught doing normative ethics would be embarrassing only for someone who, like Ayer, denied the possibility of rational argumentation in the field of normative ethics and held that a philosopher

had no business in such a field. But Hare does not hold such a view, as Kaulbach himself notes (p. 131). Hare only maintains that there is no possibility of logically deriving the most general practical principles from some other nonpractical principles. Instead he offers a type of argumentation modeled on Popper's account of how scientific laws may be rationally undermined or left standing despite attempts to undermine them. But just as a Popperian philosopher of science might claim that his account of scientific method is "scientifically neutral," so Hare might argue that his ethics (or, as Kaulbach would call it, metaethics) is morally neutral. It does not follow that all Hare says in *The Language of Morals or Freedom and Reason* concerns ethics (or metaethics) in this sense, for some of it may be, and some avowedly is, about or in normative ethics.

Kaulbach employs another type of argument (sometimes encountered in Anglo-American books) which rejects the distinction between normative ethics and metaethics; I do not find it persuasive. Kaulbach argues that the relation between descriptive and evaluative (or practical) meaning of a word is one of inseparable connectedness and mutual dependence. "It is not the case that he who uses the contemptuous word "Nigger" attaches, as it were from the outside, a value-epithet to a nuclear descriptive meaning." (p. 152) It is, rather, that the speaker's attitude is based on a perspective, which determines the selection of the objective properties of the matter visible to him. He who speaks of "Niggers" manifests in his negative attitude a certain "*Weltanschauung*." "In other words, one will see and describe those properties of persons and things which one wants to see." (p. 153) What one sees, thinks, and describes in reference to the world allows an inference to the character of one's stand and its perspective.

I want to make only two points about this contention, though no doubt a lot more could be said about it. The first is that it is a gross overstatement of an important truth. It is, of course, true that some people accept as facts whatever and only what fits agreeably into their *Weltanschauung*. I know Germans who still believe that the extermination of Jews in Hitler Germany is an invention of Allied war propaganda. But it does not follow that it is impossible for one to get to the facts or that it is impossible for people with different stands or perspectives to discover the same facts, even when these facts reflect adversely on the stands or perspectives of one of them. If I have understood Kaulbach correctly, his own account of the justification of stands involves not merely pitting these blindly against one another in a battle of wills, but reference to facts which, in light of the principles professed by the other, reflect unfavorably on his stand. In other words it does allow the possibility of my coming to know facts that I do not want to acknowledge, but that nevertheless force themselves on me, if only I am prepared to look.

The second point is more important. It is undoubtedly true that my *Weltanschauung* will predispose me, despite efforts at objectivity, to attend to facts only selectively so as to protect it from being weakened. More impor-

tant, my *Weltanschauung* will have a strong bearing on what I accept as an explanation of events and what I find acceptable as principles of action. The metaethicist is, of course, well aware of this point and partly for this reason stands back from actual moral disagreements involving references to such principles of action, and instead examines the methodological question of how one could support or oppose a particular moral position. Hare and Kaulbach appear to be in agreement on this point: whereas the support of specific moral claims, such as a certain particular person in a certain particular situation ought to do a certain particular thing, involves only the well-understood logical derivation of the particular from the general, the support of the most general practical principles involves a different and so far not clearly understood method. At this point it seems to me that Kaulbach is in the right against the metaethicists who maintain that they are concerned with only *describing* the already existing and established method of argumentation. The metaethicist seems wrong for two reasons. The first is that unlike philosophy of science or of law, moral philosophy is not the meta-inquiry of a well-established, well-understood, and well-functioning first-order discipline. On the contrary, for many important reasons which cannot be elaborated here, it has not yet become such a discipline. Philosophy thus still has the task, as natural philosophy did before the takeoff of the natural sciences, of laying the methodological foundations of this enterprise. The second reason is that even once the enterprise is successful and well established, it is always possible that someone might find a methodological improvement. Insofar as metaethics includes methodology, it is not purely descriptive, but meliorative and thus evaluative-normative.

I turn now to the author's discussion of the views of Baier. Kaulbach finds many similarities between Baier's *moral point of view* and his own *stand-taking on the ground of practical reason*, for example, that practical thinking is subject to a logic of its own, that it must pass muster in a form of justification, and that it rests on a system of interconnected reasons that determines the character of practical thinking, acting, and deciding. (p. 159) But he also notes decisive differences. Baier's principles of practical reason are "empirical." They are a set of rules that provide, for an "empirically existing" (*empirisch vorhanden*) group of human beings, an optimal modus vivendi, by furnishing them with a recipe for mutually compromising their interests. The stand on the grounds of practical reason, by contrast, requires of every agent that he place the other in a perspective of freedom from which it first becomes possible to acknowledge some of his expectations and demands as his interests. A second difference lies in the attitude the moral agent is required to take toward others. For Baier, the supreme principle of reversibility is formulated in the Golden Rule, which compromises conflicting interests and requires of each moral agent that he respect others in his own interest. For the person who takes his stand on the grounds of practical reason, by contrast, the principle of reversibility re-

quires of each moral agent that he acknowledge the free stand of the other, and entitles him to expect a similar stand from him. This acknowledgment of the other as a real and free agent establishes what Kaulbach calls a “constellation in relation to things and the other person” that finds linguistic expression in the dialogical history of mutual motivation, reason-giving, justification, and taking of responsibility. (p. 166)

These Kantian points are of some importance, and they expose major gaps in Baier's characterization of the moral point of view. But they also raise difficulties for Kaulbach's own position. Kaulbach does not distinguish, as is common among Anglo-American ethicists, between various possible normative systems of practical reasoning, such as egoism, utilitarianism, and contractarianism. Given his emphasis on freedom, it is surprising that he is not concerned with raising and examining the question of which of these systems is to be identified with moral reasoning. Or, if he regards this as an unimportant, verbal question, which of these systems is to be adopted by the moral agent? Or, if several agents, which is to be the supreme one when different systems and their methods for determining what a given agent ought to do yield different results? As I mentioned before, why should not an agent, for example, adopt for himself and acknowledge as rational the adoption of a system of rational egoism by anyone else, a problem that troubled Sidgwick and has continued to trouble Anglo-American moralists? The rational egoist can accept Kaulbach's insistence on the acknowledgment of others as free agents, yet adopt for himself and accept as rational a similar adoption of Egoism by others. In general, since anyone is free to adopt any system of practical reasoning, it is surely plausible to expect there to be a method of argument by which one can rationally decide between such competing systems, say, between egoism and utilitarianism, or between utilitarianism and contractarianism. Metaethicists, such as Hare, think they can ignore this question because they believe themselves able empirically to discover the properly *moral* method of practical reasoning and because they assume that such a method is unquestionably the one that is superior to all others, the last probably because they regard the question 'Why be moral?' as illegitimate. But Kaulbach has no defense for this position. Unlike Baier who spells out what is involved in adopting the moral point of view and then asks what non-moral reasons there are for the adoption of the moral point of view (but botches the answer to that question), Kaulbach simply spells out (and not very fully at that) what is involved in taking a stand on the grounds of practical reason and more or less leaves it at that. To say, as he understands practical reason, that "it is the a priori basis of all our practical deliberations and constitutes the ground on which we make our stand" (p. 159) seems to me indistinguishable from saying that these are the principles we *intuit*. Even this would not be so bad (though it is far from the Kantian conception of rationality) if the acknowledgment of others as free and rational beings did

indeed commit one to accepting the high moral principles Kaulbach thinks it does. But as I mentioned before, I believe all attempts to show such a connection have failed so far.

I detect in various places throughout Kaulbach's book the outlines of two arguments designed to remedy these weaknesses. I am not persuaded by what I can understand of them, but I have to confess that my own stand on these matters may have made me less receptive to them.

The first argument begins with the often-reiterated premise that the logic which is appropriate for practical reasoning at the level of taking a stand or selecting a point of view is a dialectical-dialogical one. The aspect relevant to the point in hand is that practical argumentation is not merely an exchange of information or inferences but is also an actual historical process in which what one person says makes an actual impact on others. Now, this is true and important, and holds not only for practical but also for theoretical reasoning. But although it avoids Hume's problem of how practical reason can move to action, it does not solve the logical or epistemological (that is, the evaluative-normative) problem of *how* we are to argue for and against a given method of moral argument or system of practical reasoning. One could put the problem in the form of a simple dilemma. Either there is such a method or there is not. If there is not, then Kaulbach's attempt to differentiate his approach from that of Ayer and Stevenson must fail. For if there is no such method, then there is no objectivity and no rationality in the sense Kaulbach favors: whatever the actual outcome of such *ad hominem* verbal impact-making, it is the "rational" outcome. The right is the actual. But if taking the second horn, there is such a correct method, then its dialectical-dialogical nature alone will not tell us what it is. For a false method of reasoning (say, egoism or utilitarianism) can be as actual, as dialectical-dialogical, and as motivating as a true one.

The second line of argument (I call it that rather than the second argument because I cannot identify any recognizable argument structure) attempts to support the claim that taking a stand on the grounds of practical reason involves taking a stand on the grounds of freedom which implies recognizing others as free persons, and thus always as ends in themselves and never merely as means. This line of argument occupies most of chapter 5 which, if I have followed it correctly, attempts to argue for this central thesis not directly but indirectly by demonstrating the inadequacies of the popular metaethical analysis of freedom, conscience, and action and by pointing to the unacknowledged but apparently inevitable lapses of metaethicists in this central thesis. Thus, metaethics not merely analyzes what is in fact done in a practical dialogue, but at the same time recognizes its aim, the reaching of agreement, as a valuable aim.

"Linguistic analysis thus not only records the ways in which accord, and the laws in accordance with which agreement, can be reached, but it imposes upon itself

the task of assuring a movement toward (*den Weg zur*) agreement which is recognized as valuable by clarificatory analyses of the meaning of terms." (p. 162)

The metaethical analysis of practical dialogue examines the means by which the condition of disagreement can be transformed into that of agreement and accord. But then, contrary to its own neutrality thesis, *it adopts the aim of achieving agreement*. Kaulbach concludes that

"talk, especially in the form of dialog, has practical [that is, normative] significance and that such talk (*Sprache*) requires virtues, such as tolerance, acknowledgement of one's partners, the overcoming of the egoistic standpoint by adoption of the perspective of the universal (*des Allgemeinen*).” (p. 163)

The speaker as such takes his cue from (orientiert sich an) practical norms:

Language challenges him to realize the possibilities operative in it of reaching agreement and commonality, and to overcome isolation, egoism, etc. To this extent he who declares himself ready to engage in dialog, acknowledges the other as a dialog partner, and thereby shows a set of commitments (*eine Gesinnung*) which is required by linguistic rationality (*Sprachvernunft*): one could speak of the commitments of dialog (*dialogische Gesinnung*)” (p. 163).

It is possible, though the text does not allow a decision, that Kaulbach attempts here a transcendental argument in direct support of his central thesis, starting from the (hardly questionable) premise that dialogue occurs and that those who declare themselves ready to engage in dialogue are thereby committed to the stand of linguistic rationality and its specific commitments of dialogue and through it to the stand of freedom and practical reason. If so, for such an argument to be successful, it would be necessary to spell out in full what exactly the commitments of dialogue are and whether they can possibly include the stand of practical reason. I am skeptical about such an argument, for it is hard to see why even an egoist, let alone a utilitarian or a more empirically tinged contractarian (such as Rawls) should not be able to conform to the commitments of dialogue.

I am similarly skeptical of Kaulbach's attempts (if indeed this is what he is trying to do) to extract a commitment to the stand of freedom and practical reason from the acknowledgment that human beings are free agents. There is an enormous difference between acknowledging that men are free, in the sense of being capable of genuine action or of having a free will (rather than being merely complex self-regulating things such as thermostatically controlled heating systems), and acknowledging that they are ends in themselves, with all that that implies. It seems to me that egoists and classical utilitarians could acknowledge that men are free without being thereby committed to treating them as ends in themselves. Furthermore, one might acknowledge that men are ends in themselves without being thereby committed to the stand of a priori practical reason. At any rate I have not found

in Kaulbach's discussion any clear argument to convince me of the contrary.

I do not wish to end on a negative note. I repeat that I have found the book stimulating and profitable to read and that many of its topics, including some only mentioned, deserve fuller discussion than I have been able to give to any of them.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

In the case of articles and reviews not originally written for *CGP* which are carried in translation, the Editors assume no responsibility for the accuracy of the bibliographical references. Notwithstanding, whenever, in the course of reworking the notes for an English language readership, an error is discovered, an endeavor is made, with the cooperation of the author, to correct it.

*CGP* is prepared to announce, in future volumes, the titles of books originating in German, translations of which into English are in preparation, have (within a period of two years) appeared, or are scheduled to appear. The information for such announcements, including the date by which a particular work is anticipated, or on which it appeared or is scheduled to appear, and the name of the publisher, will be welcomed by the Coordinator from persons directly involved.

In the interest of establishing contact with our purchasers, subscribers and readers, the Editors of *CGP* invite the reactions, critical and otherwise, to the first two volumes. The purpose stated in the Preface in view, suggestions are particularly welcome at this time with regard to modes and movements within philosophy currently appearing in German which in the opinion of the reader are deserving of more attention in our contents selection process than they have been accorded up to this time.



## USAGES WITHIN CGP

*A Manual of Style*, twelfth Edition (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 1969) is CGP's authority in matters of form. The following special usages will be of interest to the reader.

1) In the case of translation, notes listed under small roman numerals are by the translator or, where specifically indicated, by the coordinator or person responsible for the editing.

2) *Pointed Brackets*: If an author introduces a term, short phrase, or brief explanation into a translation which does not appear in the published German edition, this material is placed within pointed brackets: "< . . . >".

3) *Single Quotations*: Most of the many admissible usages of single quotes are adequately covered in *A Manual of Style*. The admission of the third of the usages here considered, as a concession to a fairly common practice within current philosophical literature, principally occasions this special consideration. Single quotes may be used (i) as scope indicators around a phrase, in its initial occurrence, employed to translate a foreign term for which there is no appropriate single term in English, (ii) to indicate a special or restricted sense for a term, (iii) to indicate the *mention*, as distinguished from the *use* of a term, the latter being indicated by double quotes.

The first and second usages can be especially useful in translation. The third usage, or a surrogate, will sometimes be found essential to conveying the meaning of a German text. Seeing that both the second and third usages pertain to single terms, however, they tend to be incompatible. The problem may be resolved in either of two ways: (i) The first resolution grows out of the following supplementary instruction: In the case of the first and second usages, the affected phrase or term, *upon its first occurrence within the text*, shall be followed by the foreign word being translated, in parentheses, or, if such is needed, by a translator's note. The resolution: In the case of the second usage, the translator may elect to place the foreign term translated (to be in parentheses) following the term enclosed in single quotes, *not merely the first time in which it occurs, but each time it occurs*. The foreign word in brackets will then serve as a flag to indicate the usage of single quotes which is in force. (ii) A translator may indicate mention by placing a term in italics, rather than by the use of single quotes, explaining this choice in a translator's note. This resolution will have appeal where the second usage

occurs with some frequency and where competing usages of italics can be avoided.

4) *Scope Indicators*: Parenthetical page references within the text of a review originating in English may follow a phrase, a sentence, or a group of sentences (the latter usually constituting a paragraph) being quoted or paraphrased. Where the reference pertains only to the phrase or sentence it immediately follows, this is indicated by the placement of the formal punctuation mark — usually a comma or a period — following the parenthesis.

Whitehead's simple declaration, "Objectification is abstraction" (p. 62), reflects his philosophy of science more adequately than it does his metaphysical orientation. [Not: "...abstraction," (p. 62)]

Hegel writes: "What philosophy begins with must be either mediated or immediate, and it is easy to show that it can neither be the one nor the other; thus either way of beginning is refuted" (p. 67). [Not: "...refuted." (p. 67)]

Where the page reference serves to document more than one sentence, it stands free of punctuation. In this case the paragraphing or some other stylistic device serves to co-determine the scope.

## **ARTICLES AND REVIEWS PLANNED FOR VOLUME 2**

Volume 2 of CGP will contain an original article by Eugen Fink and translations of articles by Lorenz Krüger, Joachim Ritter, Hermann Krings, Werner Beierwaltes, Ernst Tugendhat, Josef Simon, Robert Spaemann, Klaus Mainzer, Günther Patzig, and Hans-Ulrich Hoche.

Books reviewed in Volume 2 will include Theodor Ebert's 1974 study of Plato, Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* (critically introduced by Otfried Höffe), and recent Anglo-American literature on Kant (reflected on by Michael Benedikt and Klaus Hartmann).







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